VIZ PREMIERE COMICS
$3.95 USA/$5.30 CAN

2001 NIGHTS

NO. 3

Story and Art by

YUKINOBU HOSHINO

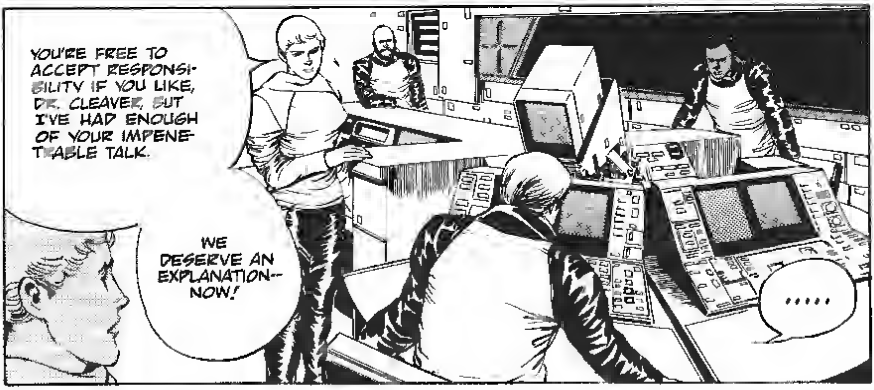
SSSSHHH
BREEP
BREEP
ALERT! EXPLOSION AT CLOSE RANGE. BLOCK 9 DESTROYED. LARGE QUANTITIES OF PRESSURIZED AIR ESCAPING. WILL SEAL AT LEVEL 3.
SSSH

F-
FATHER
CHAVEZ
!
FSSSHHH

sketch
zzt
zzt
CHOOM

BLOCKS 8 AND 9 OF LEVEL 4 DESTROYED. MINOR DAMAGE IN BLOCK 7. PART OF LEVEL 5'S RADIATION-SHIELDED ZONE IS UNUSABLE. CORRIDOR D-2 WILL BE CLOSED OFF.
C-LEVEL DAMAGE SUSTAINED IN OPERATING SYSTEMS. PIPE IN FUSION REACTOR'S HEAT EXCHANGER MAY BE DAMAGED. PRESENTLY NAVIGATING AT 40 PERCENT POWER.
RIU, HOW'S CHAVEZ DOING? IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S CALMED DOWN CONSIDERABLY.
HE'S SUFFERING FROM OXYGEN DEFICIENCY--WE GOT HIM BACK IN PRETTY QUICKLY, SO THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY BRAIN DAMAGE IT'S JUST THAT...
JUST THAT WHAT, RIU?
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT HE WAS EXPOSED TO A DANGEROUS AMOUNT OF RADIATION IN THE BLAST. WHEN WE RETURN, HE'LL HAVE TO BE GIVEN A THOROUGH EXAMINATION.

Night 7 LUCIFER RISING, Part 2


YOU'RE FREE TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY IF YOU LIKE, DR. CLEAVER, BUT I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR IMPENETRABLE TALK.
WE DESERVE AN EXPLANATION--NOW!
.....

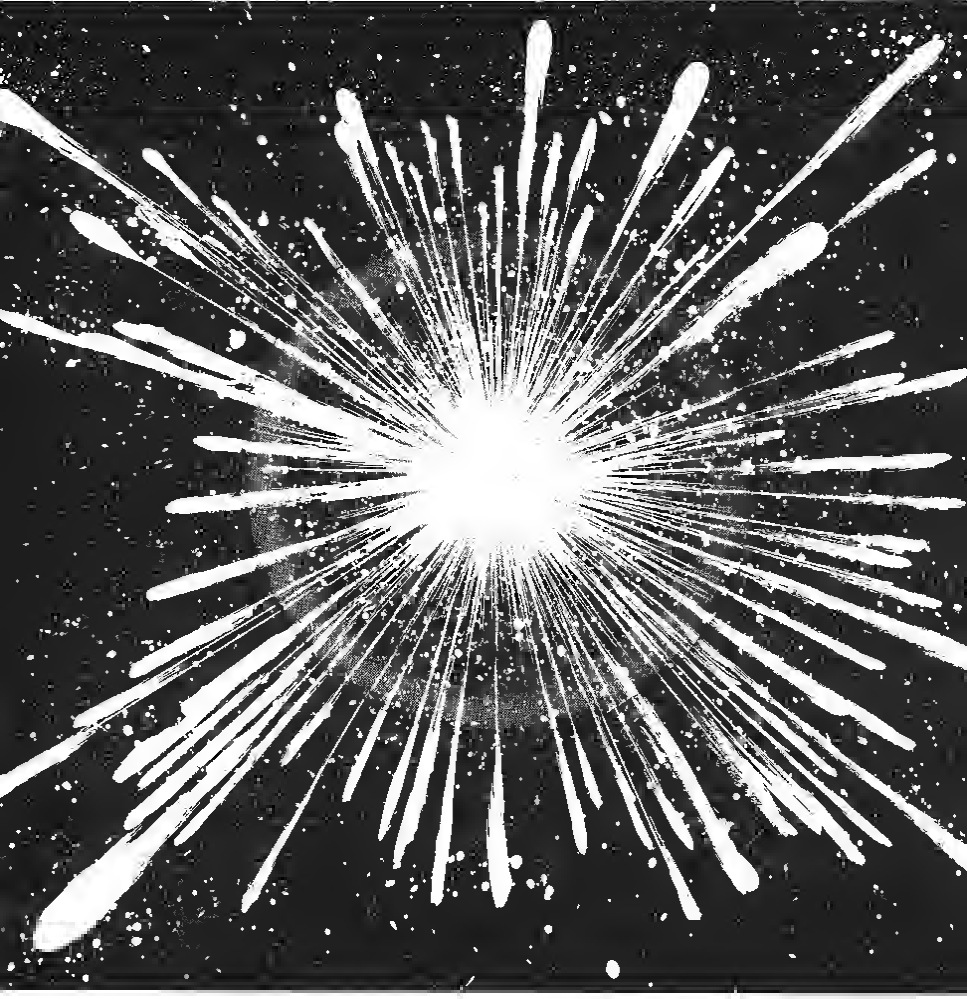
A YEAR BEFORE WE DEPARTED, A CREW MEMBER ON A TRANSPORT SHIP TOUCHED A ROCK NEAR THE ORBIT OF JUPITER...
...THE EXPLOSION THAT RESULTED WAS CALCULATED TO HAVE SEVERAL HUNDRED TIMES THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF A HYDROGEN BOMB.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, HUMANKIND HAD NEVER ENCOUNTERED SUCH ENERGY BEFORE. MY STAFF INVESTIGATED THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT, WORKING FRANTICALLY TO FIND OUT THAT ROCK'S ORIGIN.

WELL, STRICTLY SPEAKING, TO LUCIFER'S RING. BUT LUCIFER, IT'S RING, AND ITS SATELLITES ARE NO DOUBT COMPOSED OF THE SAME SUBSTANCE...

AND YOU TRACED IT BACK TO THE "MYSTERY PLANET"--TO LUCIFER?

...ANTIMATTER.
YOU MEAN THE ENTIRE LUCIFER SYSTEM IS A MASS OF ANTIMATTER?
AN ANTIMATTER PLANET...
AND WITHIN THE SOLAR SYSTEM AT THAT. WHO COULD HAVE ANTICIPATED SUCH A THING?
THAT'S WHY SOLID EVIDENCE WAS SUCH AN IMPERATIVE.



IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE LIGHT...

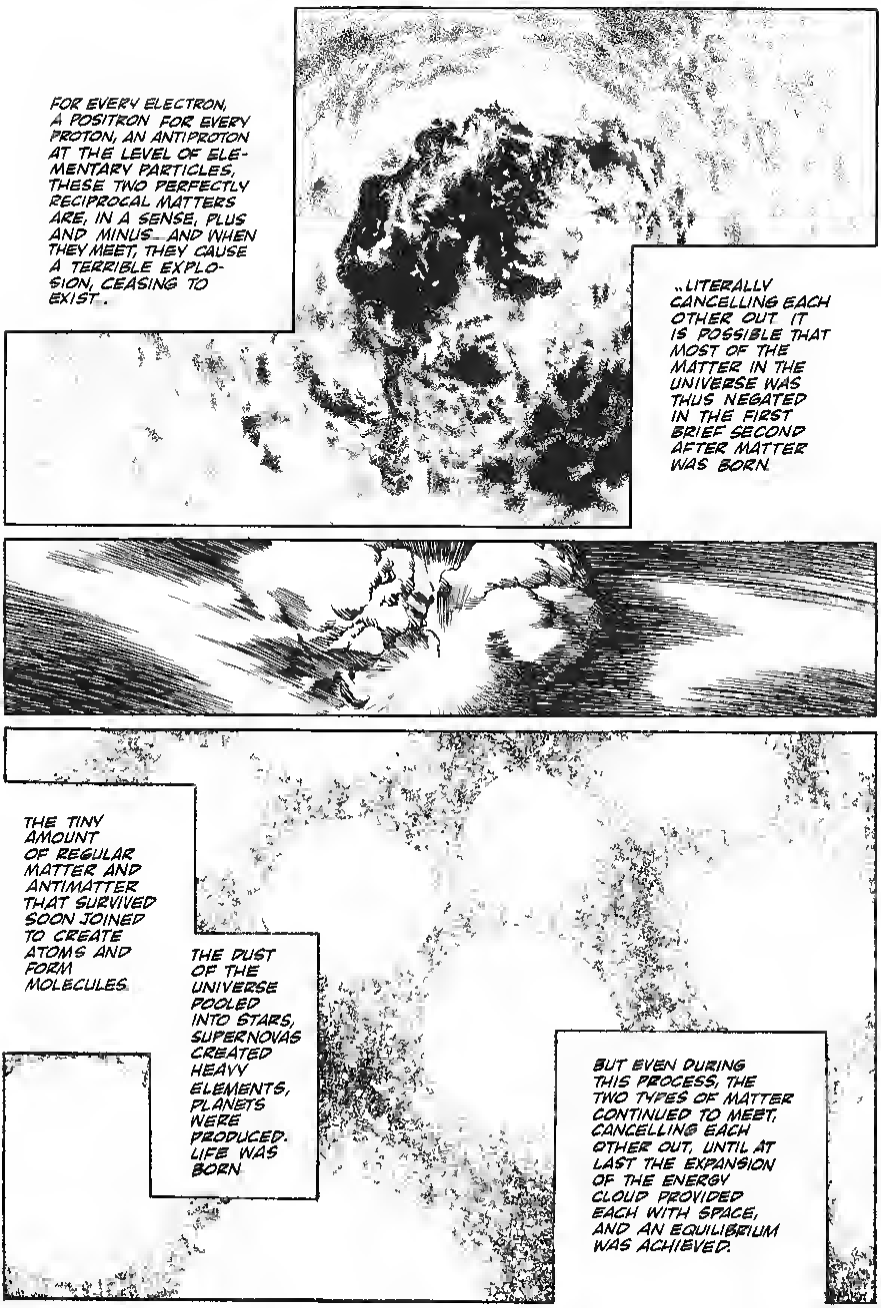
FIFTEEN BILLION YEARS IN THE REMOTE PAST THE UNIVERSE WAS CREATED IN A COLOSSAL EXPLOSION CALLED THE BIG BANG

AN INTENSE, TEN-TRILLION-DEGREE BALL OF FIRE BEGAN TO EXPAND AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT, AND A TORRENT OF ENERGY BEYOND ALL IMAGINATION SPREAD THE UNIVERSE TOWARD INFINITY

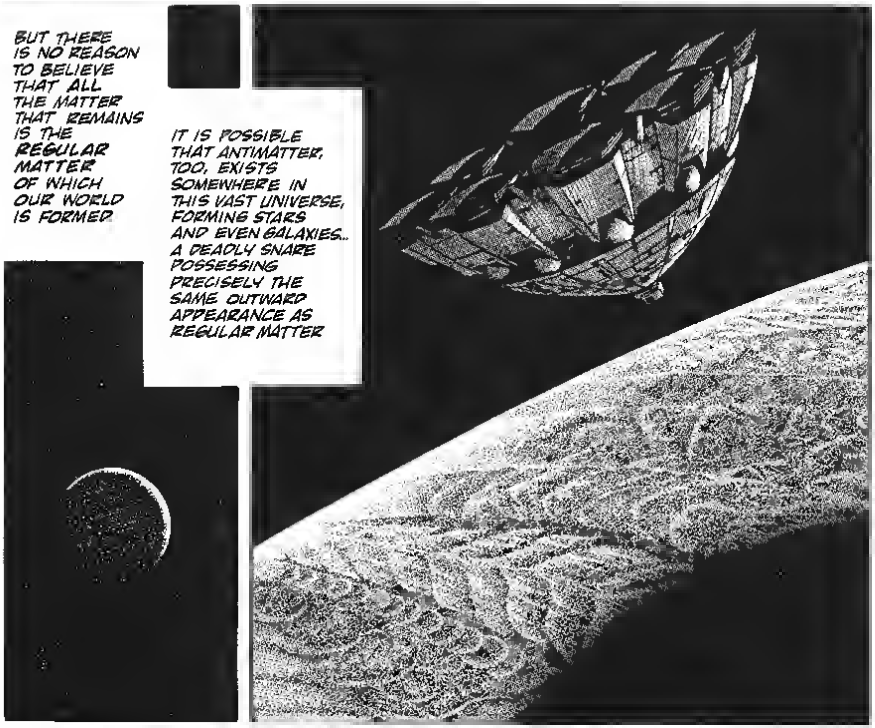
AN ENORMOUS VOLUME OF MATTER WAS BORN

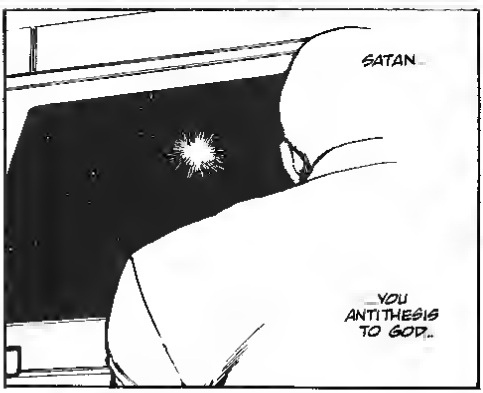
THERE WERE TWO KINDS OF MATTER IN EQUAL AMOUNTS

REGULAR MATTER AND ANTIMATTER

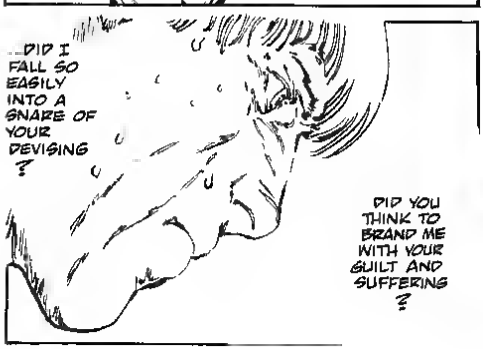

FOR EVERY ELECTRON, A POSITRON FOR EVERY PROTON, AN ANTIPROTON AT THE LEVEL OF ELEMENTARY PARTICLES, THESE TWO PERFECTLY RECIPROCAL MATTERS ARE, IN A SENSE, PLUS AND MINUS- AND WHEN THEY MEET, THEY CAUSE A TERRIBLE EXPLOSION, CEASING TO EXIST.
..LITERALLY CANCELLING EACH OTHER OUT IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MOST OF THE MATTER IN THE UNIVERSE WAS THUS NEGATED IN THE FIRST BRIEF SECOND AFTER MATTER WAS BORN.
THE TINY AMOUNT OF REGULAR MATTER AND ANTIMATTER THAT SURVIVED SOON JOINED TO CREATE ATOMS AND FORM MOLECULES.
THE DUST OF THE UNIVERSE POOLED INTO STARS, SUPERNOVAS CREATED HEAVY ELEMENTS, PLANETS WERE PRODUCED. LIFE WAS BORN.
BUT EVEN DURING THIS PROCESS, THE TWO TYPES OF MATTER CONTINUED TO MEET, CANCELLING EACH OTHER OUT, UNTIL AT LAST THE EXPANSION OF THE ENERGY CLOUD PROVIDED EACH WITH SPACE, AND AN EQUILIBRIUM WAS ACHIEVED.

ONLY A SMALL PORTION OF MATTER HAS MANAGED TO SURVIVE THIS UNIMAGINABLE FIFTEEN BILLION YEAR FEUD.
THE COUNTLESS NEBULAE AND STARS WE KNOW TODAY ARE NOTHING MORE THAN THOSE FAINT REMNANTS.


BUT THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT ALL THE MATTER THAT REMAINS IS THE REGULAR MATTER OF WHICH OUR WORLD IS FORMED.
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ANTIMATTER, TOO, EXISTS SOMEWHERE IN THIS VAST UNIVERSE, FORMING STARS AND EVEN GALAXIES... A DEADLY SNARE POSSESSING PRECISELY THE SAME OUTWARD APPEARANCE AS REGULAR MATTER


SATAN...
...YOU ANTITHESIS TO GOD...

LORD...
...GIVE ME THE STRENGTH TO FIGHT!


...DID I FALL SO EASILY INTO A SNARE OF YOUR DEVISING ?
DID YOU THINK TO BRAND ME WITH YOUR GUILT AND SUFFERING ?

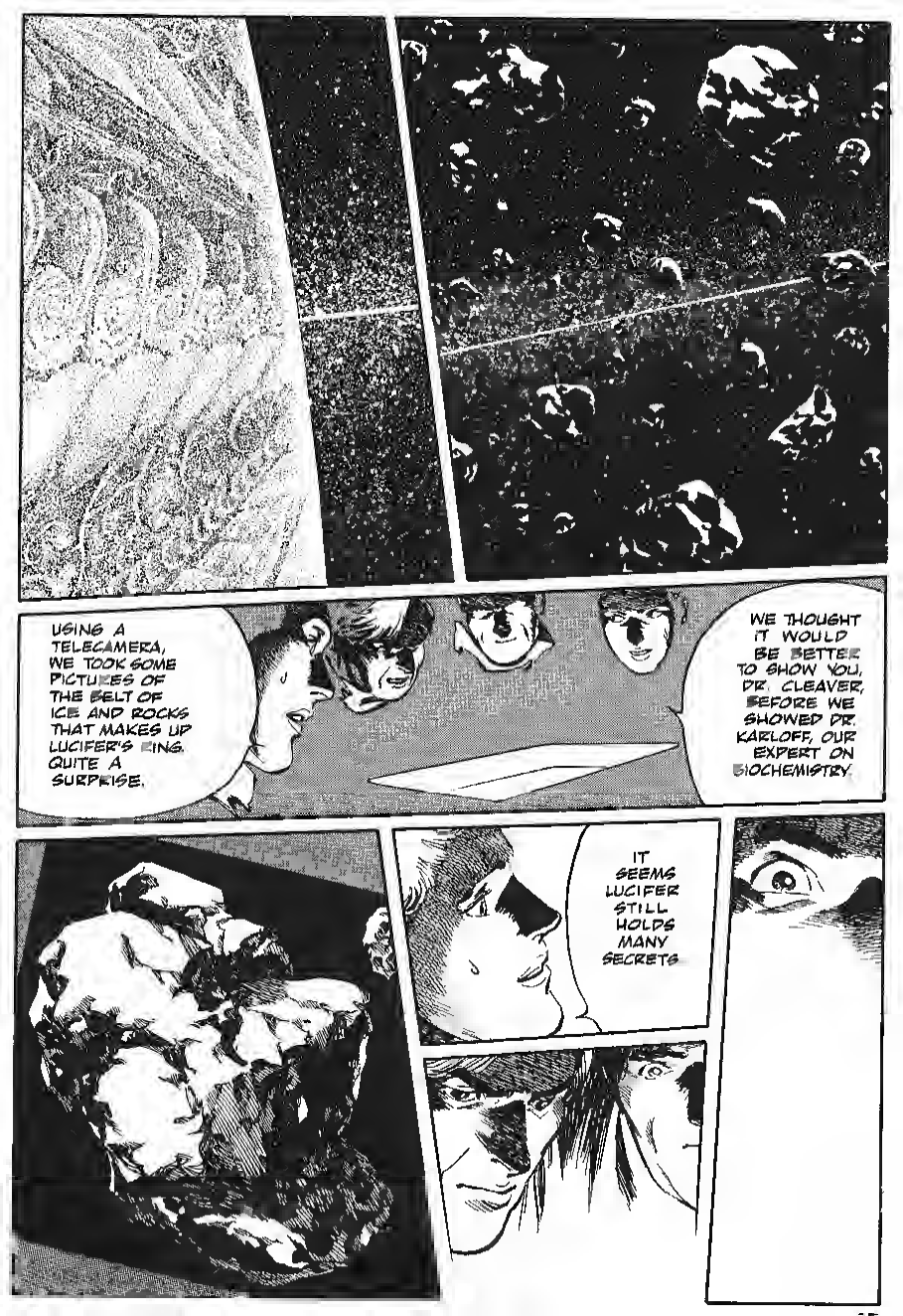
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, DR CHAVEZ ?
DON'T WORRY AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M JUST FINE PERHAPS THE NEWS ABOUT THE ANTIMATTER PLANET ACTED AS SHOCK THERAPY
I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT. THINGS ARE STILL IN DISORDER HERE, BUT WE'VE RESUMED OUR STUDIES.
WITH LESS THAN A WEEK THAT WE CAN STAY IN THE LUCIFER SYSTEM, THERE'S NO TIME TO SIT AROUND BEING DEPRESSED
TOO TRUE I'LL BEGIN WORKING WITH THE COMPARATIVE PLANETOLOGY TEAM IMMEDIATELY BY THE WAY, DR CLEAVER...
HMM ?
WHAT DOES THE ALLIED SPACE BUREAU PLAN TO DO WITH LUCIFEE AFTER THIS?

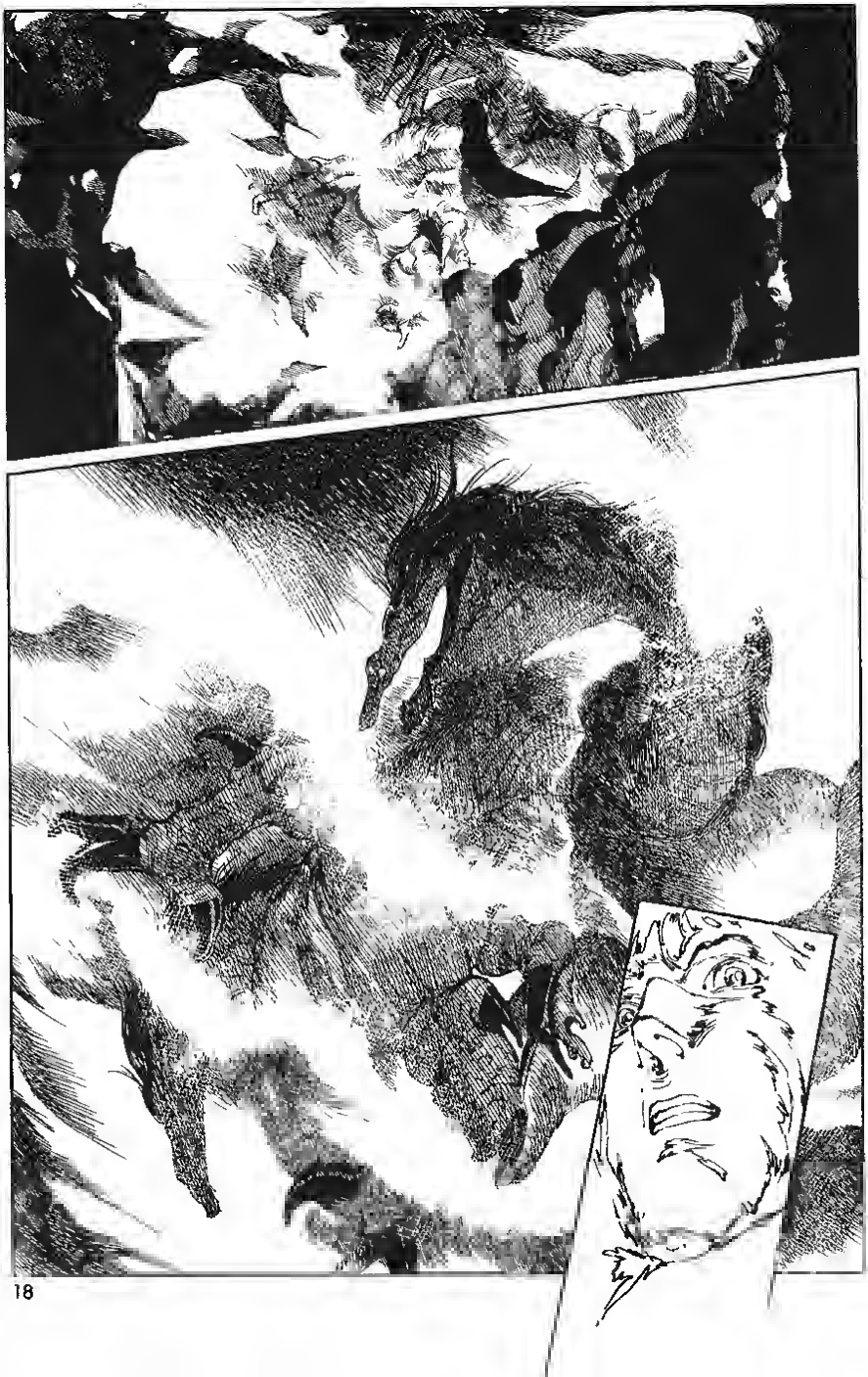
WELL, I SUPPOSE THE NEXT INVESTIGATIVE TEAM WILL CONDUCT SOME BOLDER EXPERIMENTS.
MAYBE TRY TO TAKE SOME ROCKS FROM THE RING HOME.
TAKE ANTIMATTER TO EARTH?! SERIOUSLY? THAT'S LIKE CARRYING HOME TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ARMED NUCLEAR WARHEADS!
I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND, FATHER CHAVEZ.
DO YOU REALIZE JUST HOW MUCH ENERGY HUMANITY CONSUMES IN A SINGLE YEAR--SAY, CONVERTED INTO OIL?
ABOUT TWENTY BILLION TONS!
EVEN FIGURED AS ENRICHED URANIUM, IT WOULDN'T BE LESS THAN A THOUSAND TONS.
BUT IF WE COULD HARNESS THE MATTER-ANTIMATTER REACTION, MAKE USE OF THAT INCREDIBLE ENERGY...
...THE ANTIMATTER REQUIRED WOULD BE BARELY TWO TONS!
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? TWO TONS COULD SUPPLY ALL OF HUMANITY'S ENERGY!

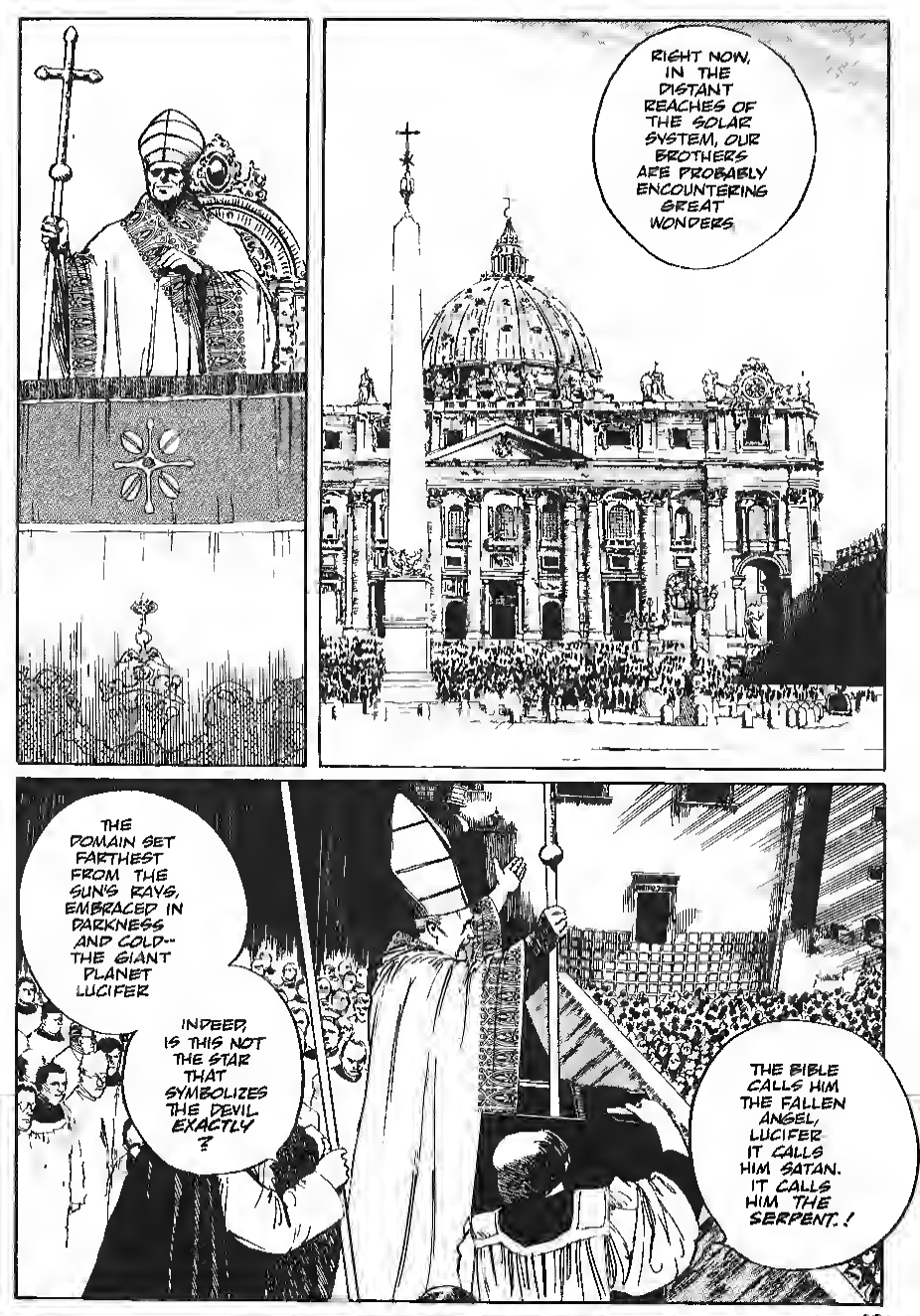
WE CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO GUESS HOW MANY YEARS' WORTH OF ENERGY CAN BE EXTRACTED FROM A SYSTEM AS HUGE AS LUCIFER AND ITS RING
YOU CAN BET IT WOULD LAST THROUGH THE END OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM-- FIVE BILLION YEARS FROM NOW!
JUST HOW ARE YOU GOING TO CARRY THE ANTIMATTER? ATTACHING A TOWLINE IS INSTANT ARMEGEDDON!
AND EVEN IF YOU COULD MOVE IT, HOW LONG WOULD IT TAKE TO REACH EARTH? TWO HUNDRED YEARS? THREE?
BUT IT'S A TIME BOMB THAT WOULD DESTROY THE SOLAR SYSTEM AT THE FIRST SLIP!
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO DEVELOP A NEW KIND OF SPACESHIP.
CHAVEZ, YOU PROBABLY KNOW THIS, BUT WE'RE ON THE VERGE OF PERFECTING A THEORY OF SPACE NAVIGATION THAT MAKES USE OF AN ARTIFICIAL BLACK HOLE.
ALL THAT'S BEEN HOLDING US BACK IS AN ENERGY SOURCE WITH ENOUGH POWER! DON'T YOU SEE ?!

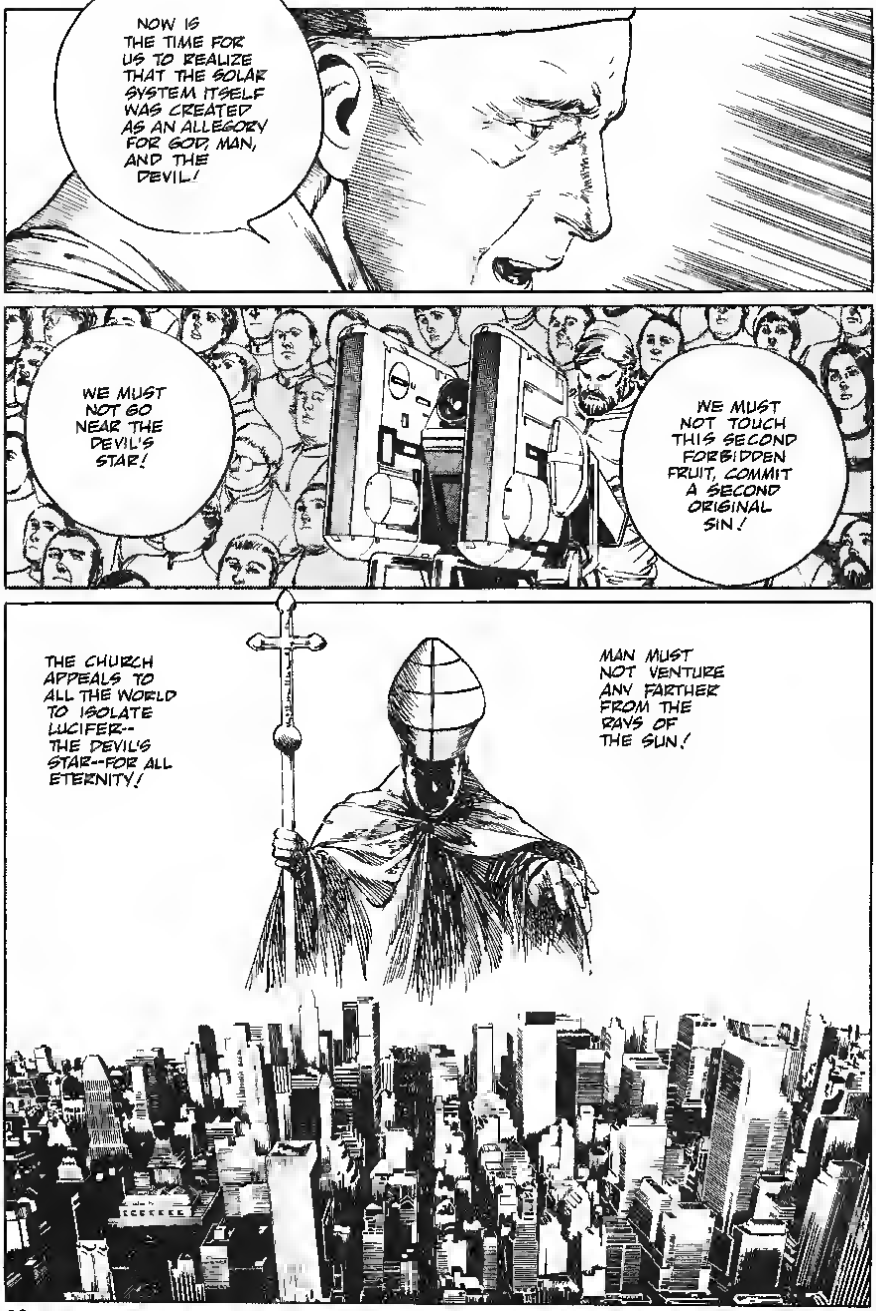
IF WE CAN DEVELOP A BLACK-HOLE-PROPELLED SPACESHIP, WE CAN USE ANTIMATTER AS THE FUEL--
AND AT THE SAME TIME HAVE A SYSTEM FOR CARRYING ANTIMATTER!
AND THAT'S NOT ALL!
THE NEW SPACESHIP WOULD MAKE INSTANTANEOUS DEEP SPACE TRAVEL A POSSIBILITY!
THE AGE WHEN HUMANITY CAN MOVE FREELY THROUGH THE FARTHEST REACHES OF SPACE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN!

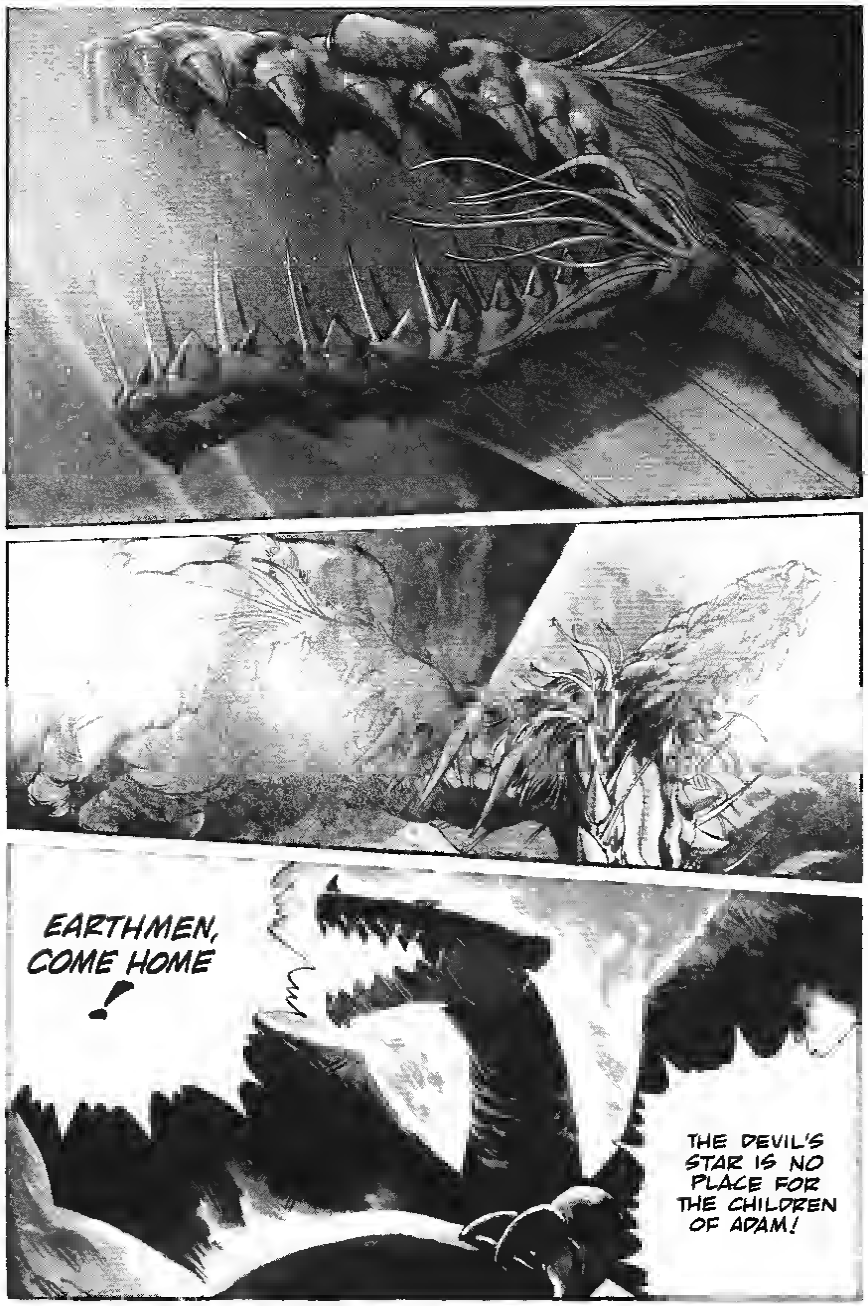
I'M AGAINST IT! YOU SEEM TO FORGET LUCIFER'S DANGER!
IT'S ALREADY CLAIMED FIVE VICTIMS, DR. CLEAVER. JUST HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL YOU ALLOW TO BE KILLED BY ANTIMATTER TO BRING YOUR DREAMS TO REALITY?
I FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED. I REALLY DO..
..AND I WON'T LET THEIR DEATHS BE IN VAIN! WE MUST EXPLOIT LUCIFER--EVEN IF IT COSTS ME MY LIFE!
EXCUSE US.
DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT?

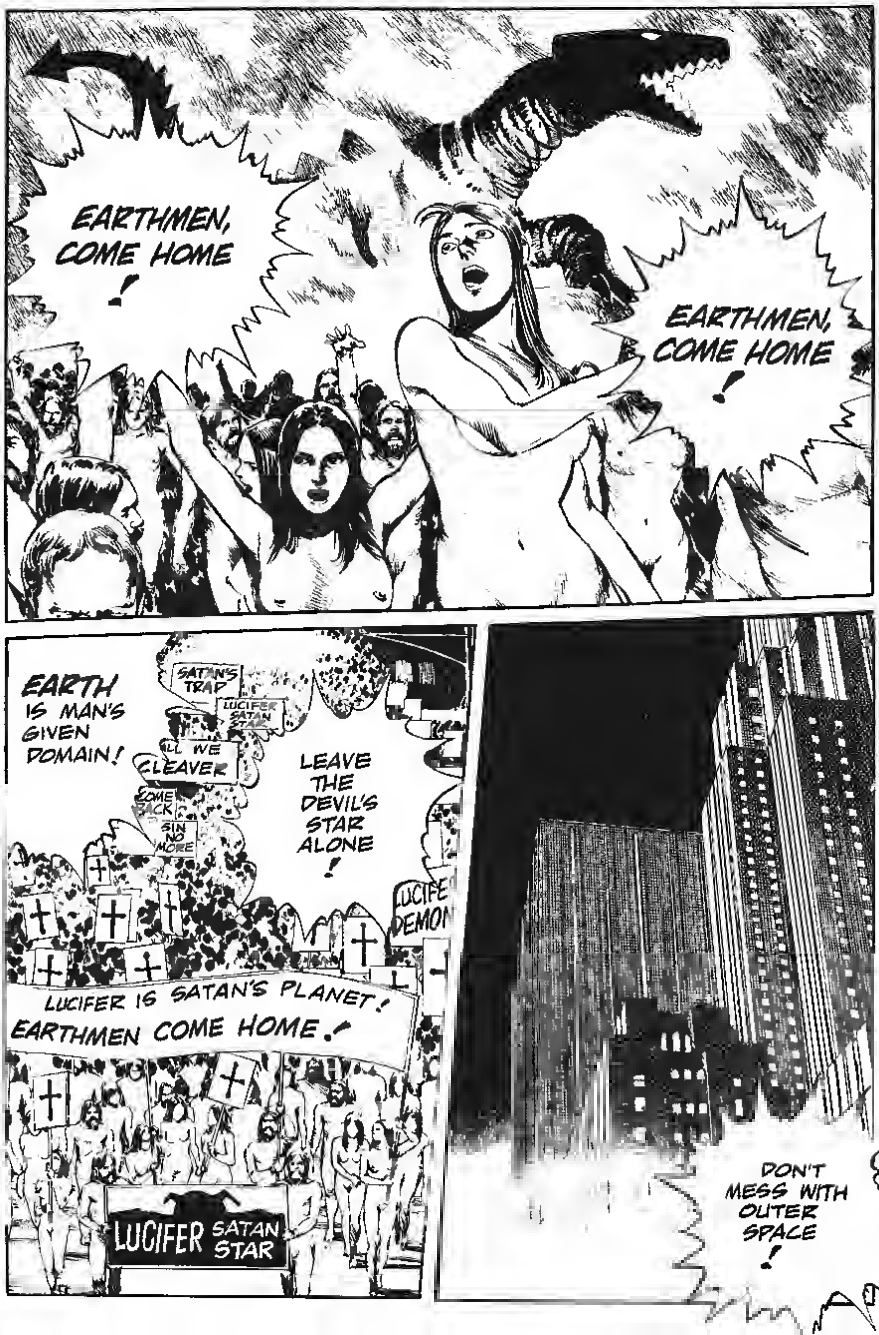

USING A TELECAMERA, WE TOOK SOME PICTURES OF THE BELT OF ICE AND ROCKS THAT MAKES UP LUCIFER'S RING. QUITE A SURPRISE.
WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO SHOW YOU, DR. CLEAVER, BEFORE WE SHOWED DR. KARLOFF, OUR EXPERT ON BIOCHEMISTRY.
IT SEEMS LUCIFER STILL HOLDS MANY SECRETS

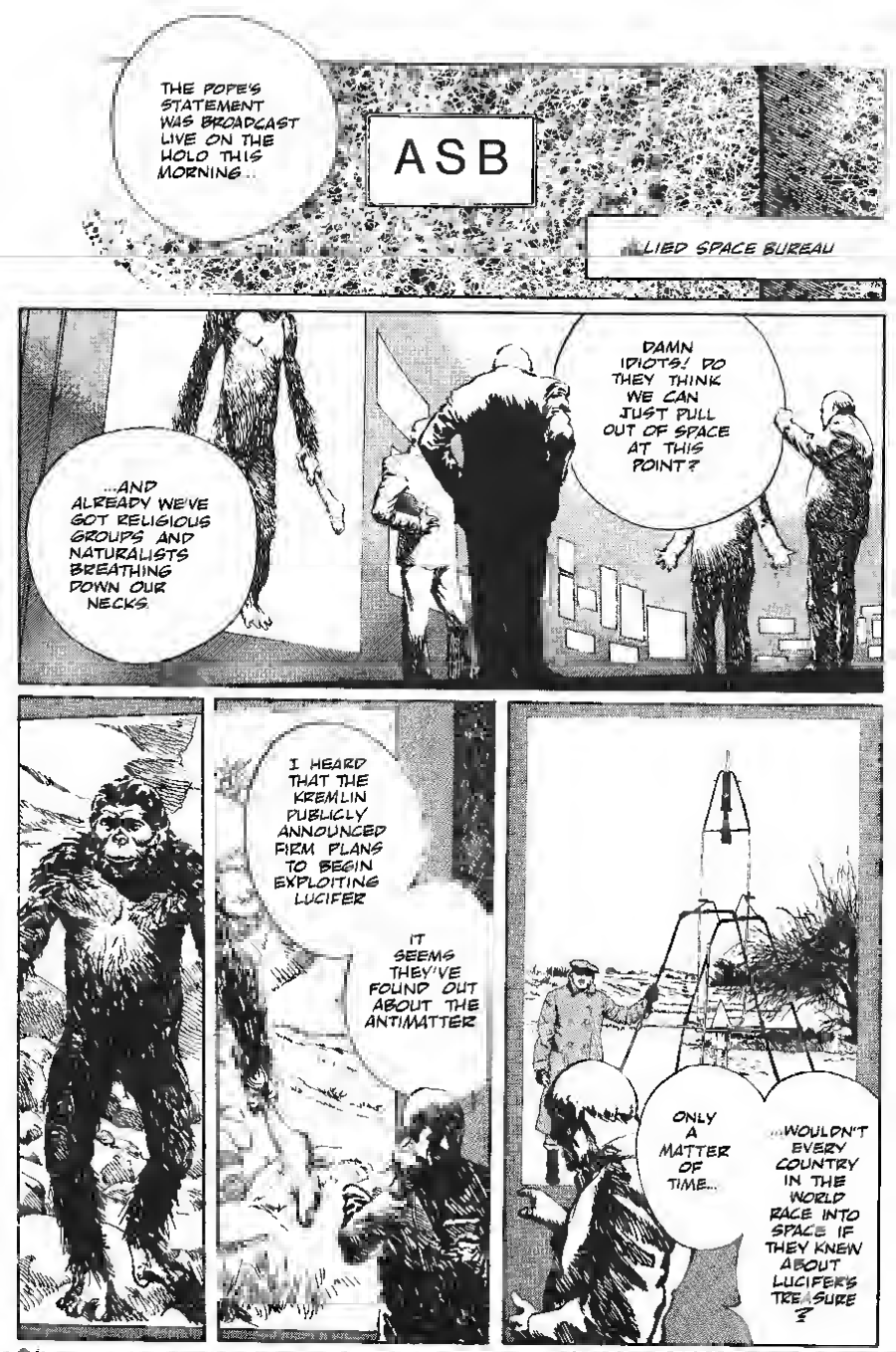



RIGHT NOW, IN THE DISTANT REACHES OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM, OUR BROTHERS ARE PROBABLY ENCOUNTERING GREAT WONDERS.
THE DOMAIN SET FARTHEST FROM THE SUN'S RAYS, EMBRACED IN DARKNESS AND COLD-- THE GIANT PLANET LUCIFER
INDEED. IS THIS NOT THE STAR THAT SYMBOLIZES THE DEVIL EXACTLY ?
THE BIBLE CALLS HIM THE FALLEN ANGEL, LUCIFER IT CALLS HIM SATAN. IT CALLS HIM THE SERPENT.!


NOW IS THE TIME FOR US TO REALIZE THAT THE SOLAR SYSTEM ITSELF WAS CREATED AS AN ALLEGORY FOR GOD, MAN, AND THE DEVIL!
WE MUST NOT GO NEAR THE DEVIL'S STAR!
WE MUST NOT TOUCH THIS SECOND FORBIDDEN FRUIT, COMMIT A SECOND ORIGINAL SIN!
THE CHURCH APPEALS TO ALL THE WORLD TO ISOLATE LUCIFER-- THE DEVIL'S STAR--FOR ALL ETERNITY!
MAN MUST NOT VENTURE ANY FARTHER FROM THE RAYS OF THE SUN!


EARTHMEN, COME HOME!
THE DEVIL'S STAR IS NO PLACE FOR THE CHILDREN OF ADAM!


EARTHMEN, COME HOME!
EARTHMEN, COME HOME!
EARTH IS MAN'S GIVEN DOMAIN!
SATAN'S TRAP
LUCIFER SATAN STAR
ALL WE CLEAVER
COME BACK
SIN NO MORE
LEAVE THE DEVIL'S STAR ALONE!
LUCIFE DEMON
LUCIFER IS SATAN'S PLANET!
EARTHMEN COME HOME!
LUCIFER SATAN STAR
DON'T MESS WITH OUTER SPACE!


THE POPE'S STATEMENT WAS BROADCAST LIVE ON THE HOLO THIS MORNING..
ASB
...AND ALREADY WE'VE GOT RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND NATURALISTS BREATHING DOWN OUR NECKS
DAMN IDIOTS! DO THEY THINK WE CAN JUST PULL OUT OF SPACE AT THIS POINT?
I HEARD THAT THE KREMLIN PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED FIRM PLANS TO BEGIN EXPLOITING LUCIFER
IT SEEMS THEY'VE FOUND OUT ABOUT THE ANTIMATTER
ONLY A MATTER OF TIME...
...WOULDN'T EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD RACE INTO SPACE IF THEY KNEW ABOUT LUCIFER'S TRUE...SURE?

AI CAELORVM+TV ES PETRVS
LORD CHAMBERLAIN, DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE CHURCH AT LAST ACCEPTED GALILEO'S SEVENTEENTH CENTURY THEORY OF A MOVING EARTH?
VATICAN CITY, THE SISTINE CHAPEL
IN THE LATE TWENTIETH CENTURY, WHEN THE CURTAIN ROSE ON THE SPACE AGE.
THREE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF GALILEO, THE CHURCH CONCEDED TO SCIENCE.
THIS TIME SCIENCE MUST CONCEDE TO THE CHURCH.
AMONG THE HERETICS, THERE ARE THOSE WHO CLAIM THAT SPACE IS THE WAY TO BECOME NEARER TO GOD.
I'D ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS THE CLOSEST PLACE TO GOD.
ISN'T THAT THE CASE?

THE ASE NEEDS A MAJOR PR CAMPAIGN TO GET OUT THE WORD ON ANTIMATTER.
IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT EARTH'S ENERGY IS RUNNING OUT LET'S TELL THEM WE CAN'T GO ON WITHOUT RESOURCES FROM SPACE
IT'S GOOD TO KNOW.
TO KNOW COMPLETELY-- THAT IS SCIENCE.
LUCIFER AND DEEP SPACE...
...WE CANNOT TURN BACK.

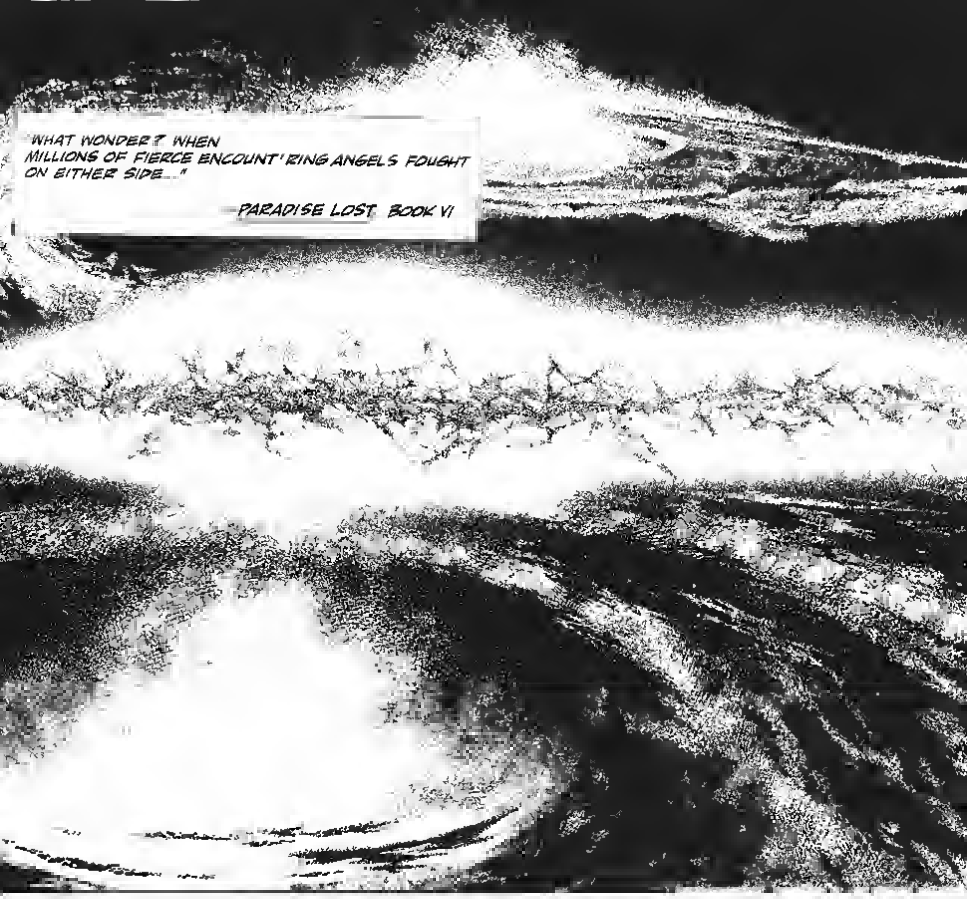
LET US WAIT FOR FATHER CHAVEZ'S REPORT.
IF HE RETURNS ALIVE, HE WILL CERTAINLY TESTIFY TO THE WHOLE WORLD ABOUT THE DEVIL'S STAR.
AND IF FATHER CHAVEZ SHOULD NOT RETURN ALIVE...?
THE HONOR OF MARTYRDOM IS NOT GRANTED TO JUST ANYONE-- ISN'T THAT SO, LORD CHAMBERLAIN ?
AT ANY RATE THE ZEFIRO IS SO FAR AWAY THAT A RADIO SIGNAL TAKES SIX AND A HALF HOURS TO REACH THEM
NO ONE CAN STOP THEM. AND NO ONE CAN SAVE THEM...

YEAH, IT LOOKS LIKE THE COOLANT PIPE'S BEEN DAMAGED SOMEPLACE, DR. CLEAVER IT'S ALL FROZEN UP.
WE SHOULD PROBABLY SHUT OFF THE HEATING SYSTEM FOR THE TIME BEING, AVOID A WATER BUILDUP
ROGER. IT'LL ALSO LOWER THE TEMPERATURE INSIDE THE SHIP, BUT I GUESS THERE'S NO AVOIDING IT.

ATTENTION ALL CREW MEMBERS! WE'VE JUST TURNED OFF THE MAIN STEAM VALVE. KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PIPES PASSING THROUGH EACH ROOM IF ANY WATER.
"AS YET THIS WORLD WAS NOT...
"HEAR, ALL YE ANGELS THIS DAY I HAVE BEGOT WHOM I DECLARE MY ONLY SON YOUR HEAD I HIM APPOINT HIM WHO DISOBEYS ME DISOBEYS, BREAKS UNION
"SO SPAKE THE OMNIPOTENT, AND WITH HIS WORDS ALL SEEMED WELL PLEASED
"MYSTICAL DANCE, WHICH YONDER STARRY SPHERE OF PLANETS AND OF FIXED STARS IN HER WHEELS RESEMBLES NEAREST MAZES INTRICATE ECCENTRIC, INTERVOLVED, YET REGULAR..."
-PARADISE LOST, BOOK V

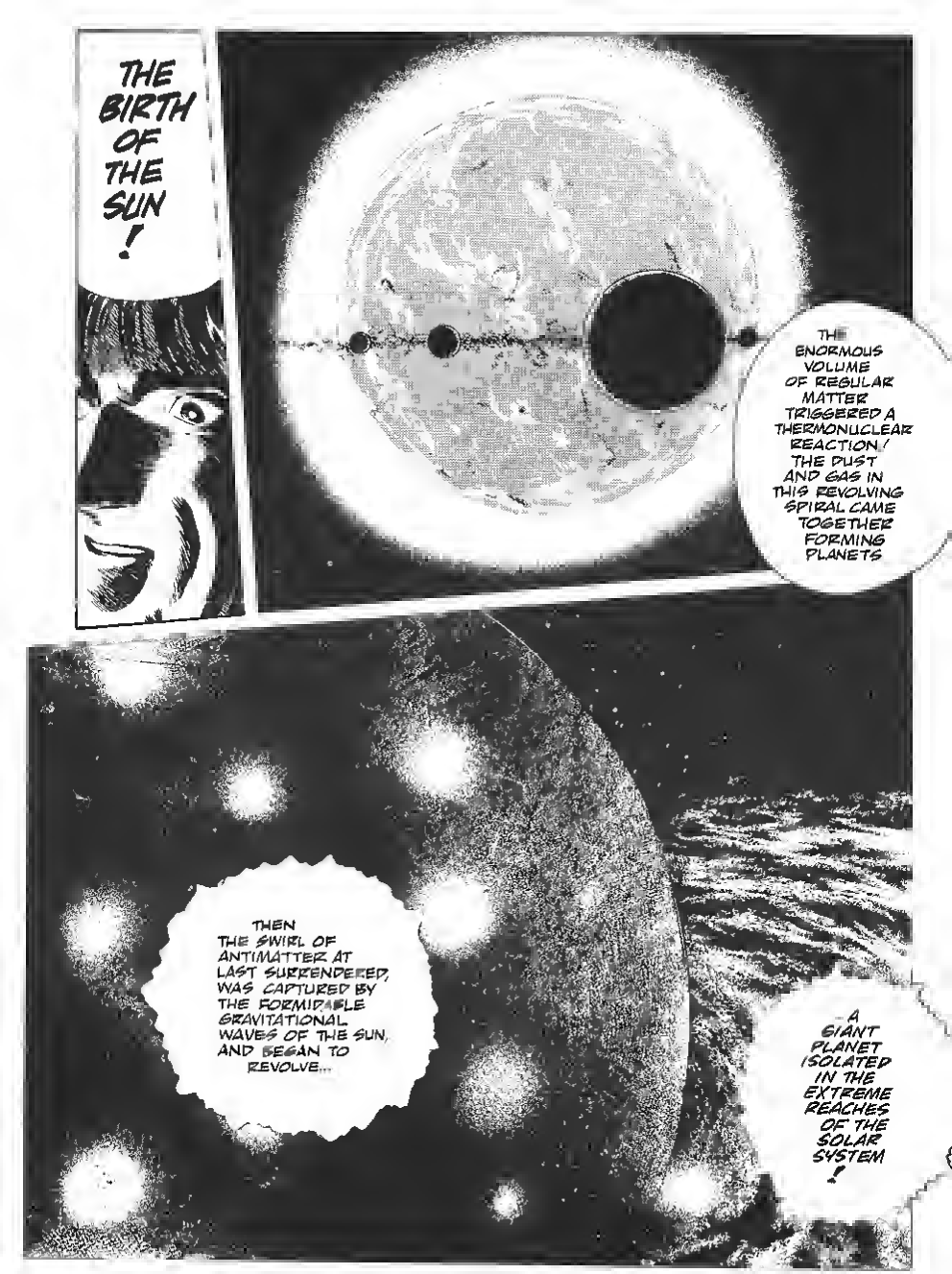
WHAT
A COMPUTER MODEL OF THE FORMATION OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM...
...LOOKING FOR A SOLUTION TO THE BIRTH OF LUCIFER, EH? INTERESTING.
YES THIS IS A SIMULATION OF THE SPIRALS OF GAS AND DUST THAT PRECEDED THE BIRTH OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM FIVE BILLION YEARS AGO.
SUPPOSE THAT AT THAT TIME REGULAR MATTER AND ANTIMATTER WERE ALREADY MIXED TOGETHER...
...NATURALLY, THE TWO MATTERS SHOULD HAVE AT FIRST REACTED TOGETHER VIOLENTLY, CONSTANTLY WIPING EACH OTHER OUT.
A BATTLE BETWEEN MATTERS...?
JUST LIKE THE BATTLE AMONG ANGELS WHICH WAS SAID TO HAVE HAPPENED BEFORE HUMANKIND WAS CREATED.
...THE FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL, BETWEEN THE ARMY OF GOD AND THE FALLEN ANGEL, LUCIFER, SATAN—
YES...

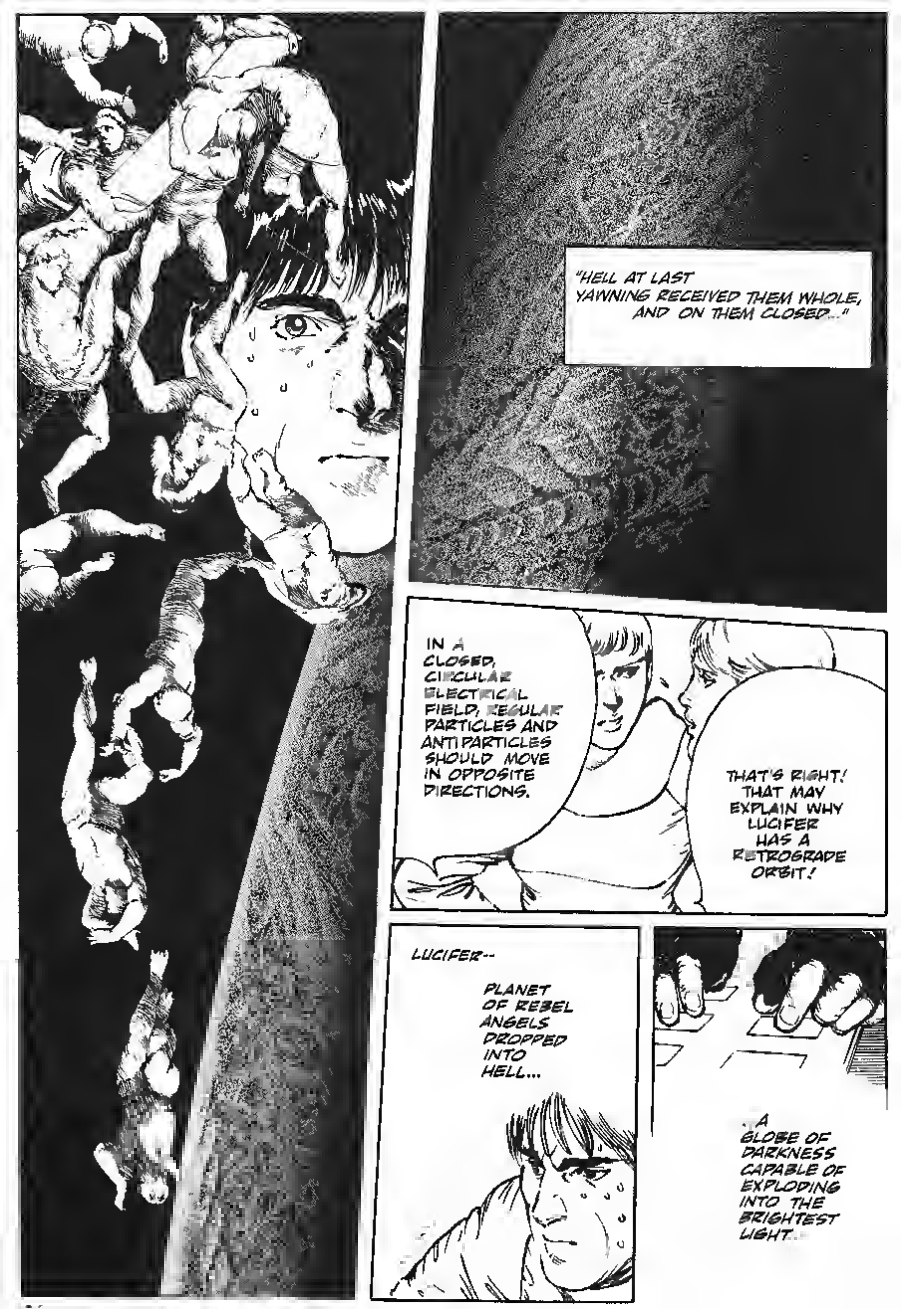
"...THE SHOUT
OF BATTLE NOW BEGAN, AND RUSHING SOUND
OF ONSET ENDED SOON EACH MILDER THOUGHT
SATAN, WITH VAST AND HAUGHTY STRIDES ADVANCED
CAME TOWERING, ARMED IN ADAMANT AND GOLD...
NOW STORMING FURY ROSE,
AND CLAMOR SUCH AS HEARD IN HEAV'N TILL NOW
WAS NEVER...



*BEADS OF WATER ON TOP OF A RED HOT METAL SURFACE ARE PROTECTED BY A LAYER OF VAPOR AND WILL NOT EVAPORATE FOR SEVERAL MINUTES. THIS ZONE OF HIGH TEMPERATURE REACTION PREVENTING THE CONTACT OF ONE MATTER WITH ANOTHER IS CALLED "LEIDENFROST'S PHENOMENON."

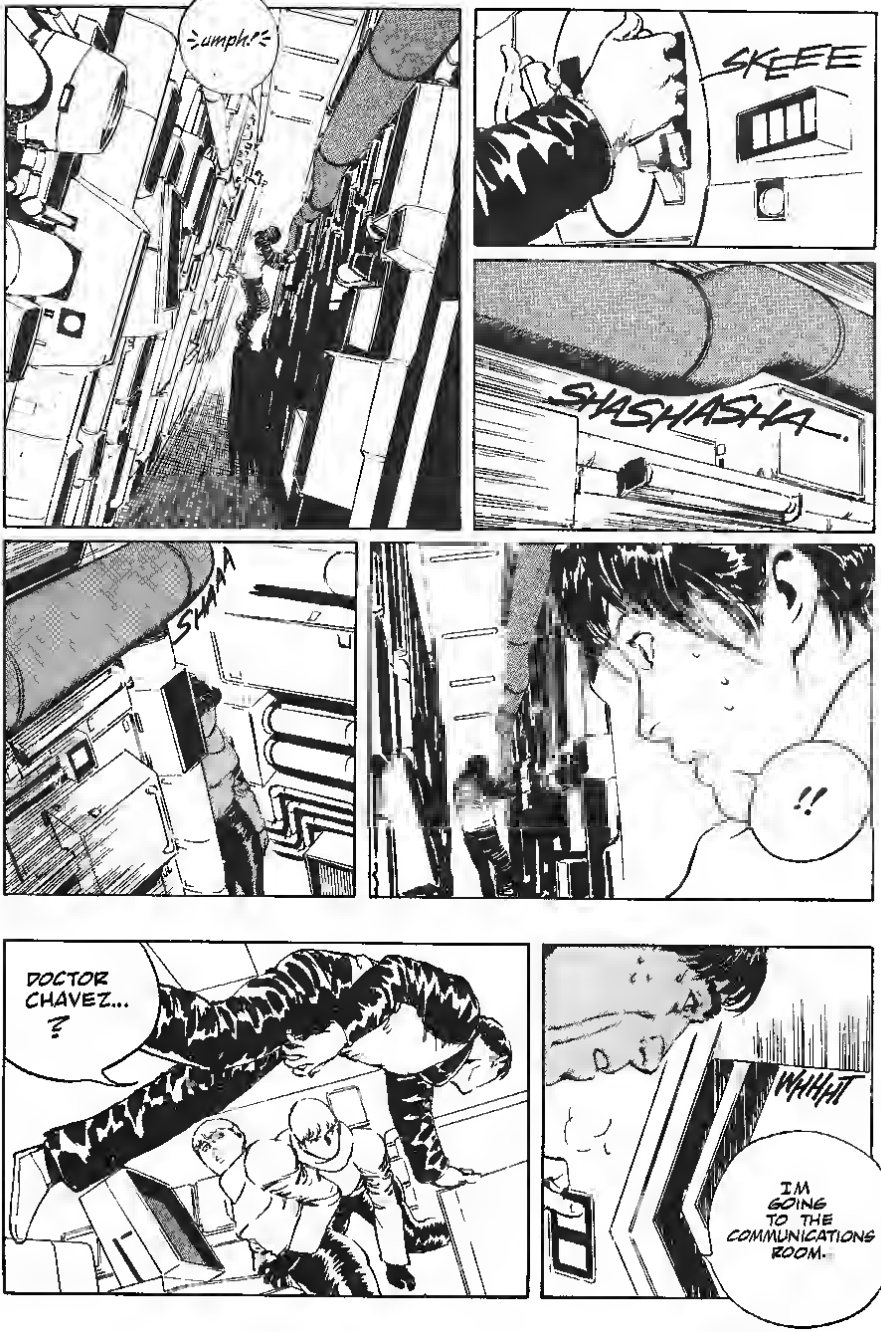
"HORRID CONFUSION HEAPED
UPON CONFUSION ROSE. AND NOW ALL HEAVN
HAD GONE TO WRACK, WITH RUIN OVERSPREAD..
"WHENCE TO HIS SON,
TH' ASSESSOR OF HIS THRONE, HE THUS BEGAN:
"SON BELOVED.. SORE HATH BEEN THEIR FIGHT
AS LIKELIEST WAS WHEN TWO SUCH FOES MET ARMED
EQUAL IN THEIR CREATION THEY WERE FORMED..
"SAVE WHAT SIN HATH IMPAIRED
GO THEN THOU MIGHTIEST..
PURSUE THESE SONS OF DARKNESS, DRIVE THEM OUT
FROM ALL HEAVN'S BOUNDS INTO THE UTTER DEEP."

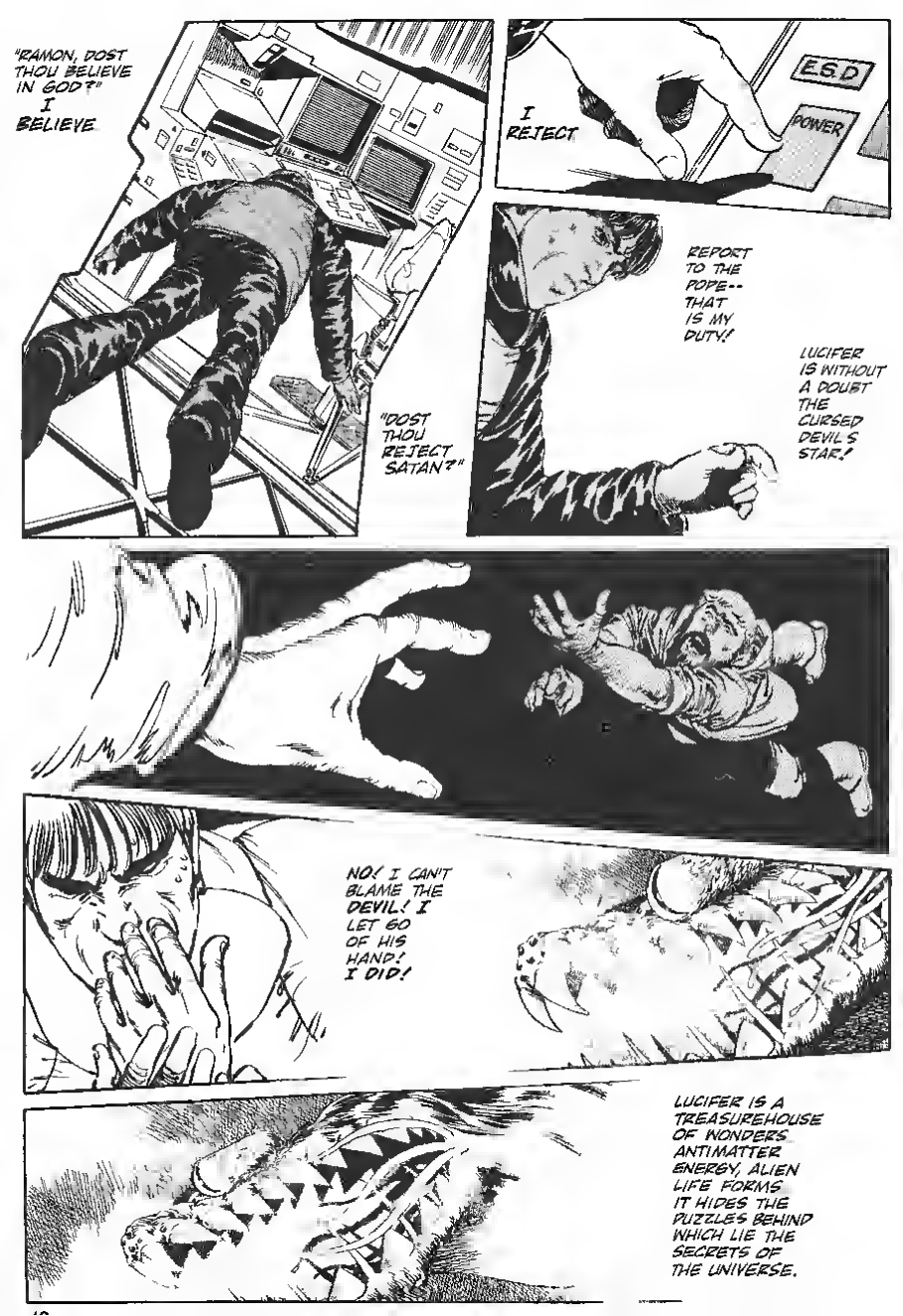

THE BIRTH OF THE SUN!
THE ENORMOUS VOLUME OF REGULAR MATTER TRIGGERED A THERMONUCLEAR REACTION. THE DUST AND GAS IN THIS REVOLVING SPIRAL CAME TOGETHER FORMING PLANETS
THEN THE SWIRL OF ANTIMATTER AT LAST SURRENDERED, WAS CAPTURED BY THE FORMIDABLE GRAVITATIONAL WAVES OF THE SUN, AND BEGAN TO REVOLVE...
A GIANT PLANET ISOLATED IN THE EXTREME REACHES OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM!


"HELL AT LAST
YAWNING RECEIVED THEM WHOLE,
AND ON THEM CLOSED..."
IN A CLOSED, CIRCULAR ELECTRICAL FIELD, REGULAR PARTICLES AND ANTI PARTICLES SHOULD MOVE IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS.
THAT'S RIGHT! THAT MAY EXPLAIN WHY LUCIFER HAS A RETROGRADE ORBIT!
LUCIFER--
PLANET OF REBEL ANGELS DROPPED INTO HELL...
A GLOBE OF DARKNESS CAPABLE OF EXPLODING INTO THE BRIGHTEST LIGHT...

A THERMONUCLEAR REACTION ON LUCIFER...?
IS ANYTHING ELSE CONCEIVABLE?
THERE'S NO OTHER WAY LIFE COULD HAVE APPEARED IN THIS EXTREMELY COLD SPACE
ANTIMATTER SATELLITES... ANTIMATTER LIFE FORMS... EXACTLY THE ANTITHESIS OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM.
ANCIENT LUCIFER WAS AN ANTI-SUN!

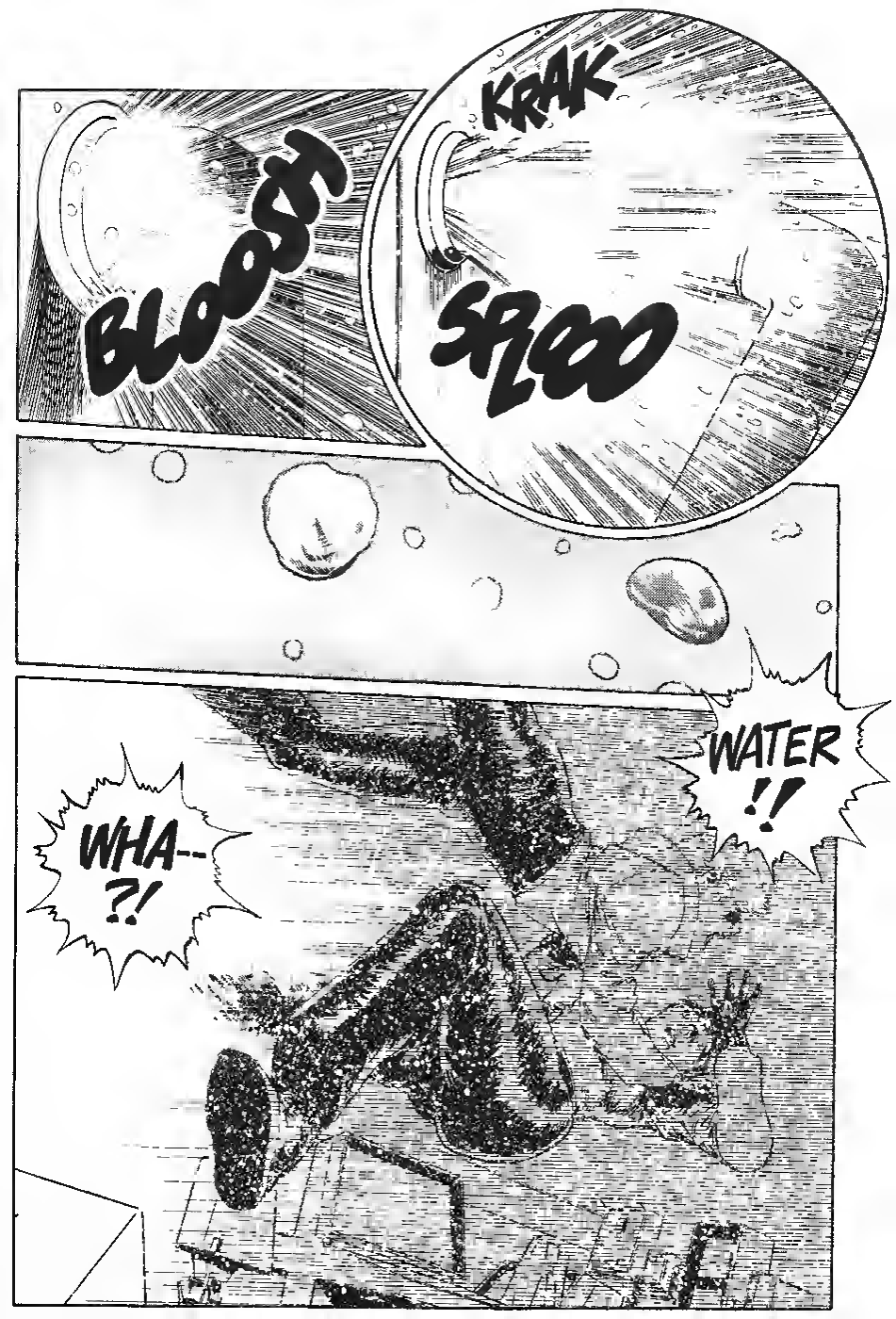
BUT EVENTUALLY LUCIFER BURNED OUT, BEGAN TO COOL..
...AND ITS SATELLITES UNDERWENT VIOLENT CHANGES AS A RESULT, CRUMBLING, BECOMING THE RING.

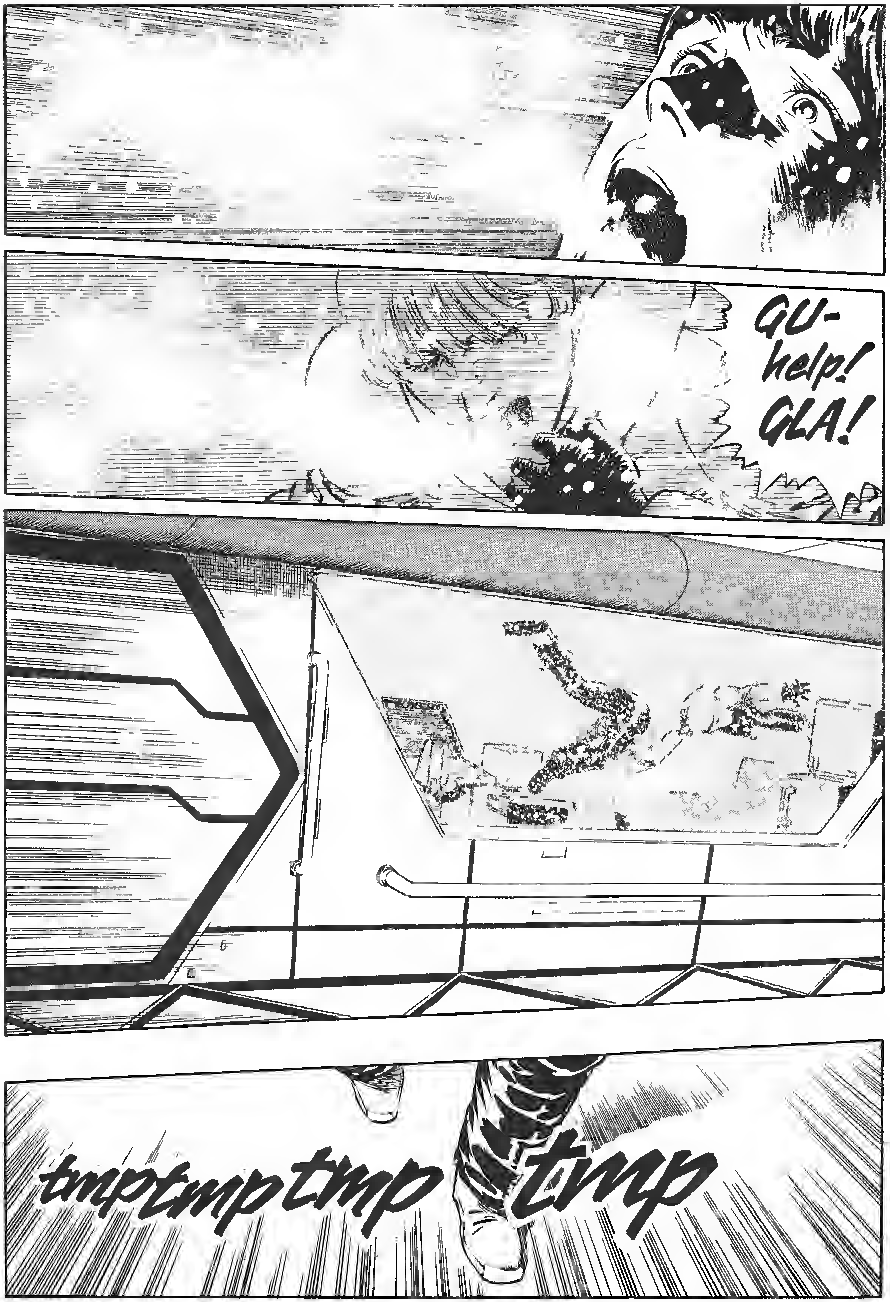

:umph!:
SKEEE
SHASHASHA...
SHAAA
!!
DOCTOR CHAVEZ...
?
WHHAT
IM GOING TO THE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM.


"RAMON, DOST THOU BELIEVE IN GOD?"
I BELIEVE
"DOST THOU REJECT SATAN?"
I REJECT
ESD
POWER
REPORT TO THE POPE-- THAT IS MY DUTY!
LUCIFER IS WITHOUT A DOUBT THE CURSED DEVIL'S STAR!
NO! I CAN'T BLAME THE DEVIL! I LET GO OF HIS HAND! I DID!
LUCIFER IS A TREASUREHOUSE OF WONDERS. ANTIMATTER ENERGY, ALIEN LIFE FORMS. IT HIDES THE PUZZLES BEHIND WHICH LIE THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE.

CAN WE JUST WALK AWAY FROM IT NOW? EVEN IF IT MEANS THE DESTRUCTION OF SPACE SCIENCE ITSELF?
RAMON, YOU'RE A SCIENTIST AS WELL!
KREK
THE BIGGEST DISCOVERY OF THE CENTURY! WE'LL BOTH BE PROMOTED AT THE ACADEMY!
NOW, TANYA-- WAIT 'TIL WE GET HOME ALIVE BEFORE YOU CELEBRATE! THIS SHIP'S DANGEROUS

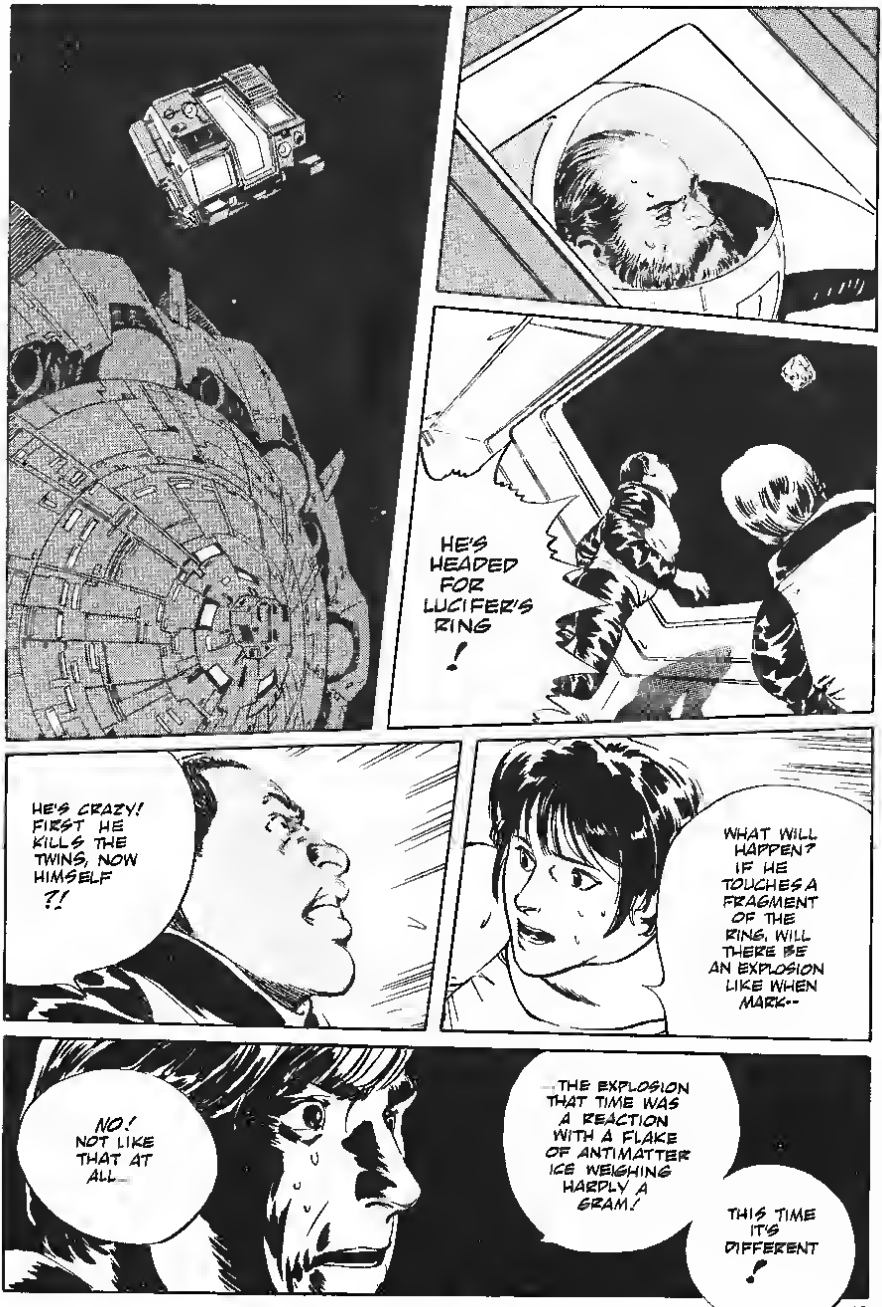
IT'S ALL RIGHT, VERA, IF NOTHING ELSE, WE CAN AT LEAST TRUST EACH OTHER TO THE END.
AFTER ALL, WE HAVE BEEN TOGETHER SINCE WE WERE BORN...
THAT'S WHY THE SOVIET SCIENCE ACADEMY SENT US ON THIS TRIP--
--WE'LL SURVIVE! YOU AND I ALONE WILL GET HOME ALIVE..
SHHHH
-1°
KREEK
KRRRR
SHA SHA SHA


BLOOSH
KRAK
SPLOO
WHA--?!
WATER!!


GU-
help!
GLA!
tmptmptmp
tmp

uff uff uff
uff uff uff
MY GOD! THEY'VE DROWNED!
THEY MUST'VE INHALED COUNTLESS DROPS OF WATER.

...WHEN THIS MUCH WATER RUSHES INTO A SEALED ROOM IN A FREEFALL BLOCK, WELL-- IT'S ONLY NATURAL...
SOMEBODY OPENED THE MAIN VALVE, RELEASING HIGH PRESSURE WATER...
WHO ?! WHY ?!
HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL THAT DEVIL KILL BEFORE HE'S SATISFIED ?!
.....
...LORD...
WHERE'S DR. KARLOFF ? I HAVEN'T SEEN--
BRRMMMM

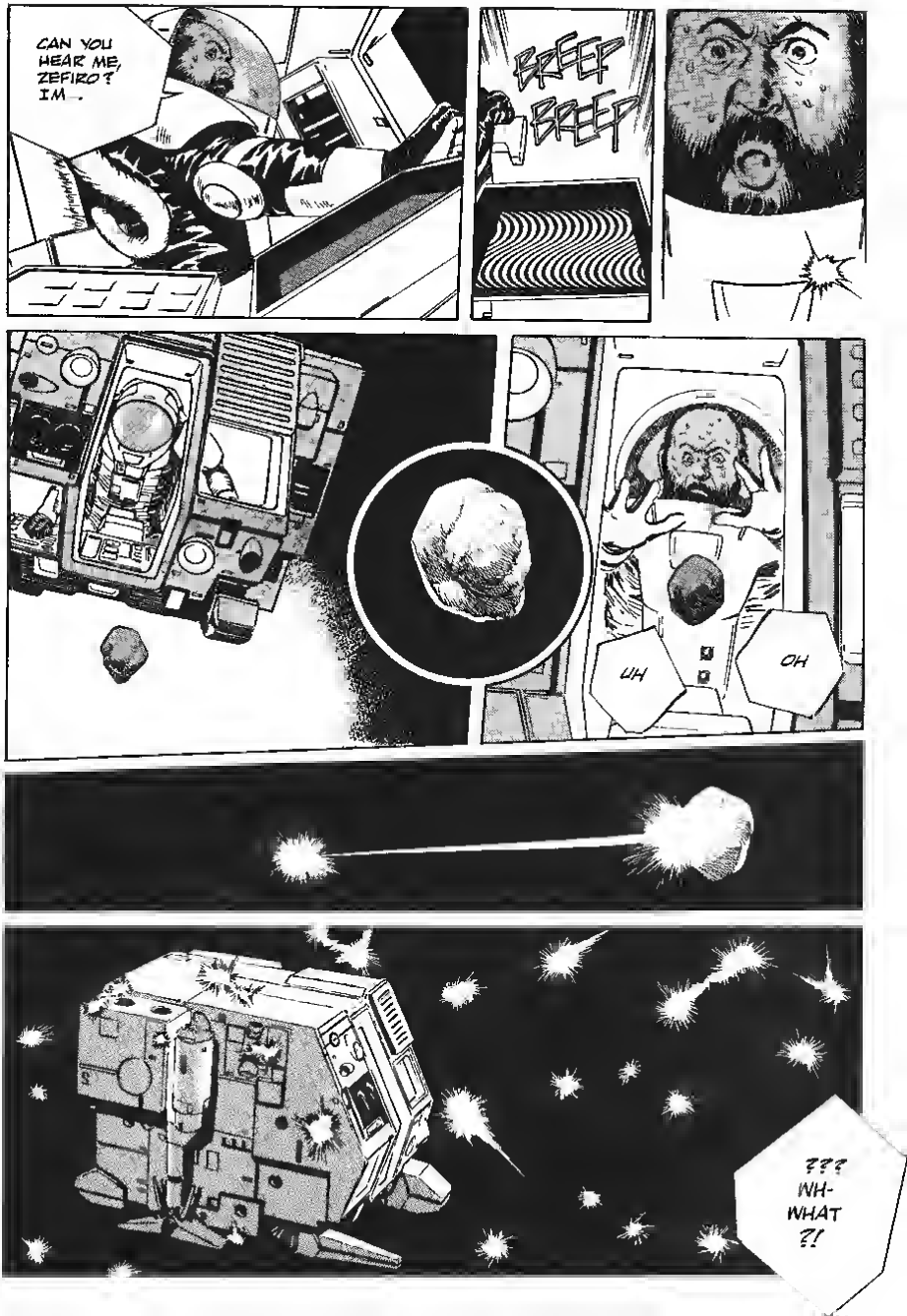

HE'S HEADED FOR LUCIFER'S RING!
HE'S CRAZY! FIRST HE KILLS THE TWINS, NOW HIMSELF?!
WHAT WILL HAPPEN? IF HE TOUCHES A FRAGMENT OF THE RING, WILL THERE BE AN EXPLOSION LIKE WHEN MARK--
NO! NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL--
--THE EXPLOSION THAT TIME WAS A REACTION WITH A FLAKE OF ANTIMATTER ICE WEIGHING HARDLY A GRAM!
THIS TIME IT'S DIFFERENT!

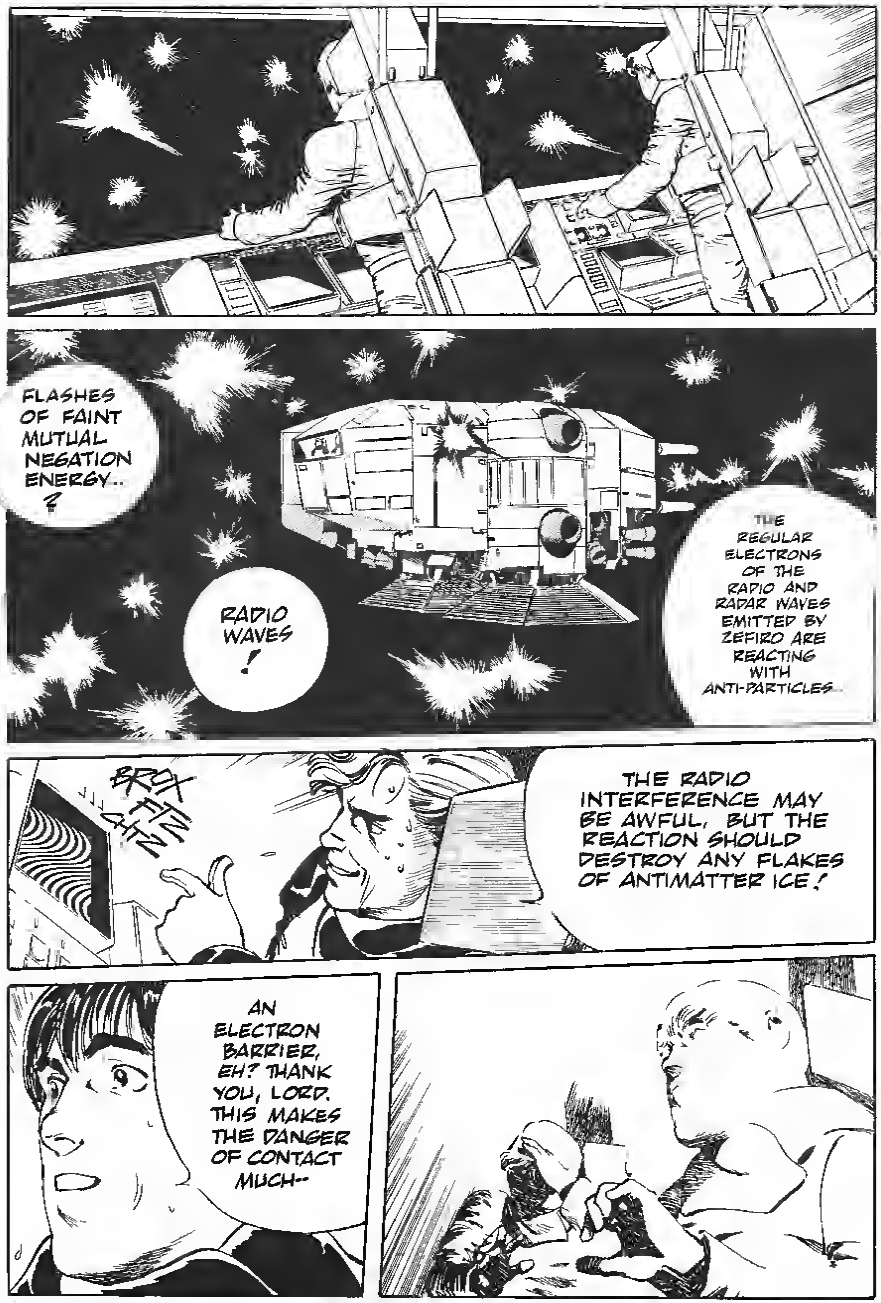
IF HE COMES IN CONTACT WITH A BIG ENOUGH LUMP OF ICE, WE'LL HAVE A CANCELLING OUT EQUAL TO THE ONE TON MASS OF THE WORK POD.
THE EXPLOSIVE ENERGY WILL BE A MILLION TIMES THAT OF THE FIRST BLAST!
THERE'LL BE NO WAY TO SAVE OURSELVES!
I'M GOING OUT! I'VE GOT TO BRING HIM BACK!
AND THIS TIME I WON'T LET GO OF HIS HAND!

THIS EMERGENCY SAFETY BOAT HAS MORE POWER THAN KARLOFF'S POD, DR. CHAVEZ.
WITH THE TWO OF US OPERATING IT, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CHASE HIM DOWN.
BUT GETTING CLOSE TO THE RING IS LIKE ENTERING A MINEFIELD OF ANTIMATTER PARTICLES! IF EITHER OF US HITS ONE...
NO MATTER WHAT, WE'VE GOT TO BRING KARLOFF BACK BEFORE HE CONTACTS A HUGE MASS OF ANTIMATTER!

.....
KARLOFF, ANSWER US! KARLOFF!
IF YOU CAUSE AN EXPLOSION, WE'RE ALL FRIED! DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?!

DAMN!
EITHER THAT MACHINE-DUMB KLUTZ HAS GOT THE COMMUNICATOR TURNED OFF, OR HIS HANDS ARE FULL JUST DRIVING!
WAIT... THAT'S RIGHT! KARLOFF IS A BIOLOGIST. HE'S TERRIBLE WITH MACHINES.
...HOW COULD THAT GUY PULL OFF TRICKS LIKE CHANGING COMPUTER CIRCUITS OR SABOTAGING COMPLICATED PIPES?!
T-TANYA AND VERA-- DEAD! I SAW...
WHO C-CAN I TRUST? IF I STAY IN THE SPACESHIP, I MAY BE THE NEXT ONE KILLED!
BUT BEFORE I DIE, I HAVE TO SEE IT-- GET NEAR THAT ALIEN LIFE FORM. THAT IS MY LAST WISH AS A BIOLOGIST!


CAN YOU HEAR ME, ZEFIRO? IM—
BREEP BREEP
UH
OH
???
WH-WHAT ?!


FLASHES OF FAINT MUTUAL NEGATION ENERGY..?
RADIO WAVES!
THE REGULAR ELECTRONS OF THE RADIO AND RADAR WAVES EMITTED BY ZEFIRO ARE REACTING WITH ANTI-PARTICLES...
BROX FRI GHZ
THE RADIO INTERFERENCE MAY BE AWFUL, BUT THE REACTION SHOULD DESTROY ANY FLAKES OF ANTIMATTER ICE!
AN ELECTRON BARRIER, EH? THANK YOU, LORD. THIS MAKES THE DANGER OF CONTACT MUCH--

KARLOFF
?!
KUNNGGAAM

KARLOFF! CLEAVER! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF RADIATION..
CHAK
BOOM
AN ANTIMATTER REACTION ?
Krack!
chk
AH... KARLOFF! CAN YOU HEAR ME?
SOMETHING'S CRASHED ON THE FAR SIDE OF LUCIFER... A SMALL CELESTIAL BODY--KRCKL SZT
CELESTIAL BODY ?!
THE ATMOSPHERIC LAYERS ARE RAGING FROM THE SHOCK WAVE.
THANK GOD IT WAS ON THE FAR SIDE. OUR SHIELD SEEMS TO HAVE ABSORBED MOST OF THE RADIATION THAT PENETRATED LUCIFER'S THICKNESS

A COMET! OF REGULAR MATTER!
FAR BEYOND EVEN LUCIFER, AT THE FARTHEST PERIMETER OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM, IS A NEST OF COMETS CALLED OORT'S CLOUD
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT A TREMENDOUS GRAVITATIONAL FORCE COULD PULL SOMETHING IN FROM THERE.
ONE EVERY SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS--PULLED HERE TO COLLIDE AND EXPLODE? DID WE JUST WITNESS THAT?!
A BEATEN STAR.
"ME MISERABLE! WHICH WAY SHALL I FLY INFINITE WRATH, AND INFINITE DESPAIR? WHICH WAY I FLY IS HELL; MYSELF AM HELL!
BEHOLD INSTEAD OF US OUTCAST, EXILED, HIS NEW DELIGHT MANKIND CREATED, AND FOR HIM THIS WORLD..!"

IF THAT'S SO..
IF THE LOSS OF MASS CONTINUED, THE STAR WOULD LOSE PRESSURE AT THE CORE-- IT COULD NO LONGER MAINTAIN A THERMONUCLER REACTION!
IS THIS THE CAUSE OF LUCIFER'S BURNING OUT AND COOLING, CHAVEZ?!
..THEN LUCIFER HAS BEEN BOMBED BY COUNTLESS COMETS OVER THE LAST SEVERAL BILLION YEARS! EACH MASSIVE EXPLOSION OF MUTUAL NEGATION MUST HAVE VAPORIZED SOME OF LUCIFER'S MASS!
LUCIFER BURNING OUT? DR CLEAVER.
--WERE YOU LISTENING TO MY CONVERSATION WITH TANYA AND VERA?
"SO FAREWELL HOPE!, FAREWELL REMORSE! AS GOOD TO ME IS LOST, EVIL, BE THOU MY GOOD!"
PARADISE LOST, BOOK IV

CUEVER!
UNGH!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE ALONE, CHAVEZ...
...BUT THOSE INTERFERING WOMEN TOOK YOUR PLACE! I HURRIED, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.
AGHAK...
AT FIRST I PLANNED TO HAVE YOU DIE IN THE HIBERNATION CAPSULE! I HAD UHURU SABOTAGE THE COMPUTER.
WHUD
BUT AT THE LAST MINUTE, HE GOT SCARED, TRIED TO NOTIFY EARTH.
WHUD
SO I KILLED HIM!
UHURU WAS A CORPSE EVEN BEFORE WE TOOK OFF!

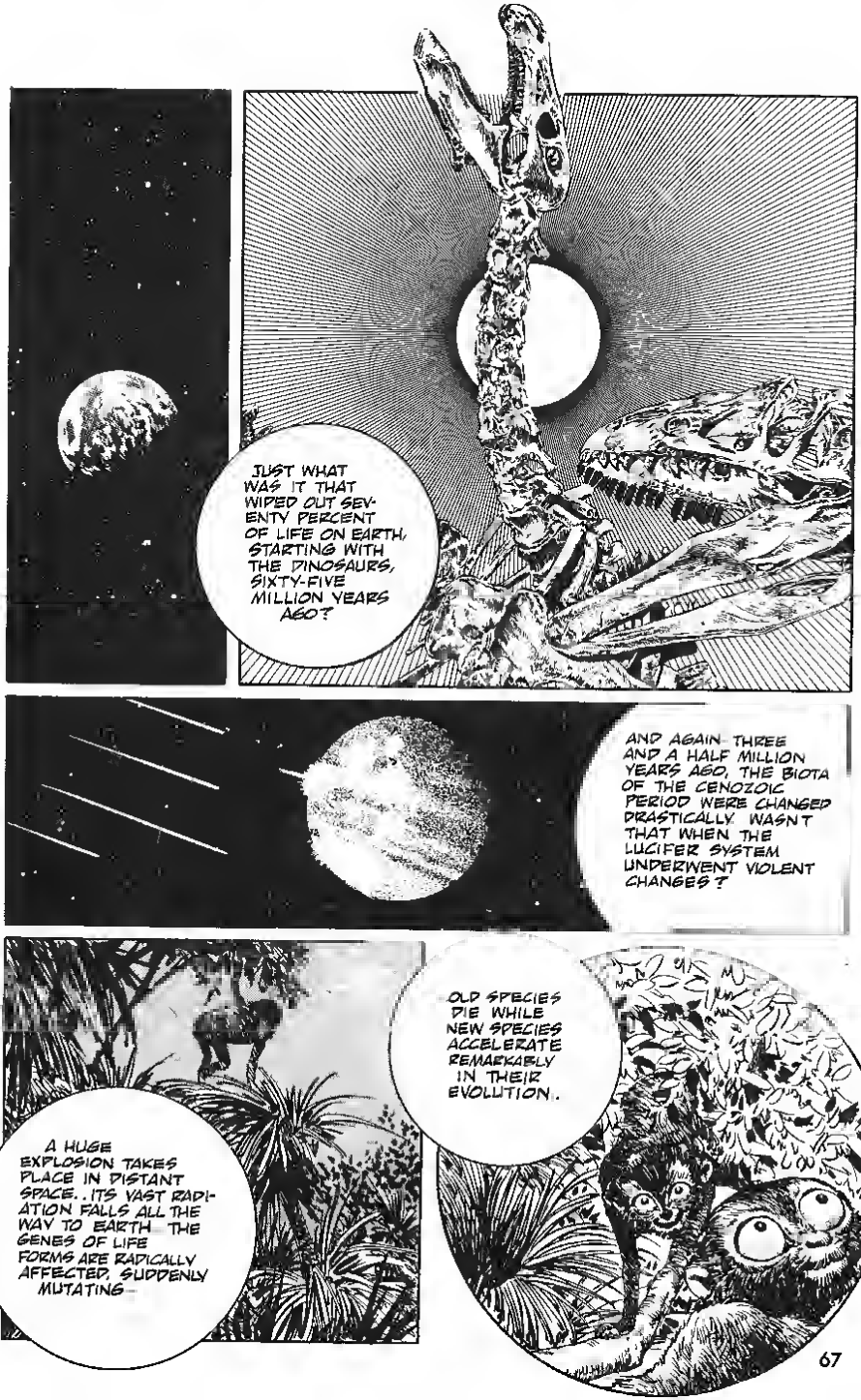
IF YOU WANT TO CALL ME A DEVIL, GO AHEAD!
I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I? I WON'T LET THOSE I'VE SACRIFICED TO ADVANCE OUR KNOWLEDGE DIE IN VAIN! I WON'T!
I-I'M NOT A SPY! I'M A SCIENTIST! EVEN ME!
THE PROGRESS OF SCIENCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN BOUGHT WITH THE BLOOD OF VICTIMS!
BUT YOU SAY WE SHOULD LEAVE LUCIFER ALONE, DON'T YOU, VATICAN SPY!?
WHAT
DOCTOR!

"REVENGE, AT FIRST THOUGH SWEET,
BITTER ERE LONG BACK ON ITSELF RECOILS;
LET IT, I RECK NOT—
"SO IT LIGHT WELL AIMED,
SINCE HIGHER I FALL SHORT, ON HIM WHO NEXT
PROVOKES MY ENVY, THIS NEW FAVORITE
OF HEAV'N, THIS MAN OF CLAY, SON OF DESPITE..."
PARADISE LOST, BOOK IX
RESCUE TEAM! HURRY! KARLOFF WILL CRASH ANY MINUTE!
I-I WAS WATCHING, BEFORE, TOO..
..I WAS WORRIED, SLIPPED INTO THE AIRLOCK.

DON'T INTERFERE RIU
IF THIS MAN GETS BACK ALIVE, THE VATICAN WILL--
23 A
IS THIS ANY TIME TO BE FIGHTING ?!
STOP PLEASE IF THIS GOES ANY FURTHER
...PLEASE... MICHAEL, I...

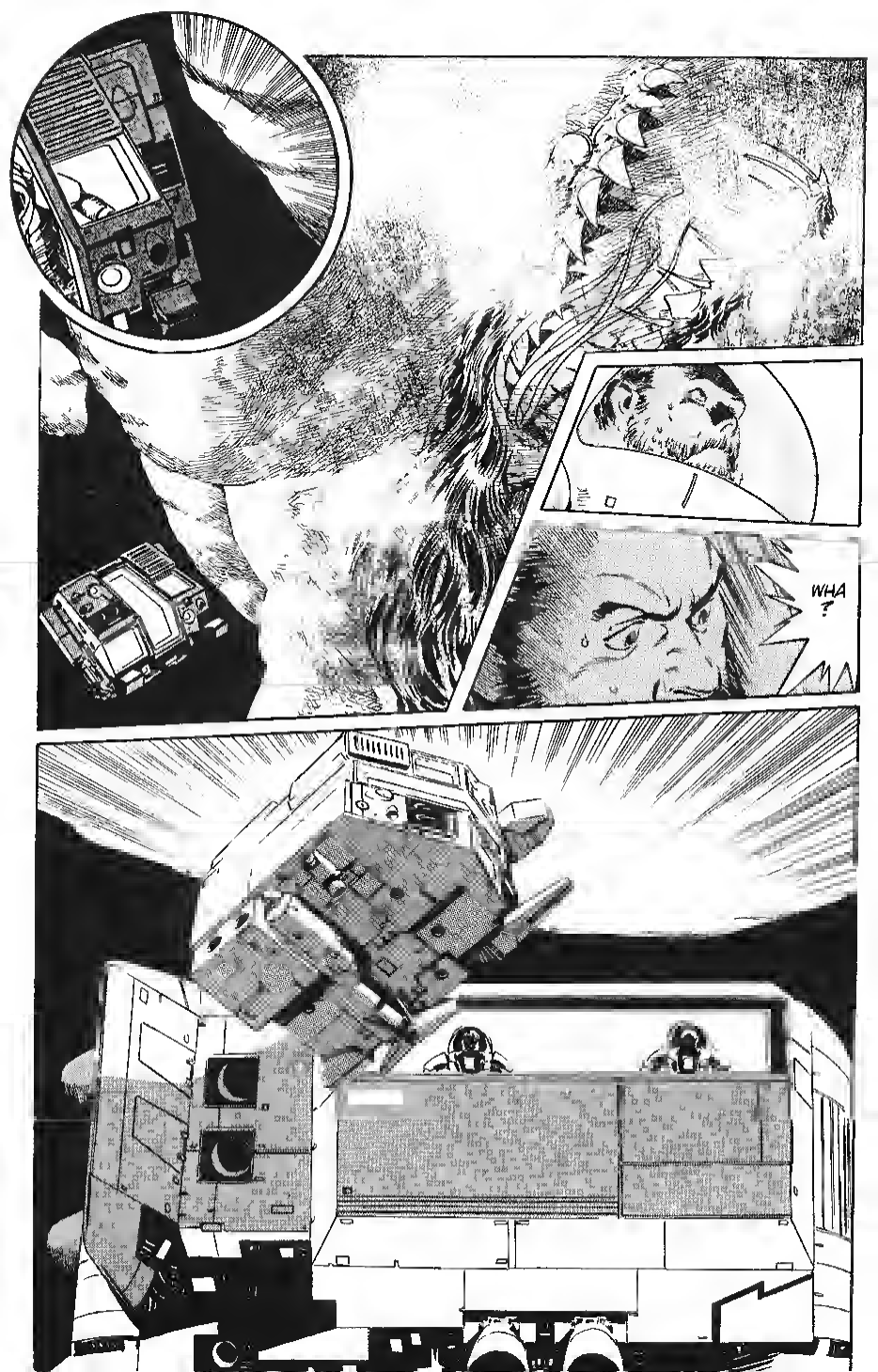
B-BOTH OF YOU, PUT THESE ON! HURRY!
DR. CLEAVER... COME ON!
WE'VE GOT NO TIME FOR CHOOSING METHODS. WE'LL JUST CHASE DOWN THE POD WITH ALL THE POWER WE'VE GOT AND KNOCK IT AWAY!
IGNITE THE MAIN BURNER! FULL POWER!

THE WORK POD IS 210 KILOMETERS AWAY, AT REST BY THE ICE BLOCK...
I KNOW THIS ISN'T THE TIME...
BUT, CHAVEZ, WILL YOU LISTEN TO MY HYPOTHESIS?
MICHAEL, THIS IS HARDLY THE TIME FOR THIS!
I'M TALKING ABOUT THE EARTH!
...IF, AGES AGO, A GIANT COMET CAUSED AN EXPLOSION GREAT ENOUGH TO SHAKE THE LUCIFER SYSTEM, THE RADIATION STORM MAY HAVE SURGED ALL THE WAY TO THE CENTER OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM!
THAT LAST EXPLOSION SCATTERED LARGE QUANTITIES OF RADIATION...


JUST WHAT WAS IT THAT WIPED OUT SEVENTY PERCENT OF LIFE ON EARTH, STARTING WITH THE DINOSAURS, SIXTY-FIVE MILLION YEARS AGO?
AND AGAIN— THREE AND A HALF MILLION YEARS AGO, THE BIOTA OF THE CENOZOIC PERIOD WERE CHANGED DRASTICALLY. WASN'T THAT WHEN THE LUCIFER SYSTEM UNDERWENT VIOLENT CHANGES?
A HUGE EXPLOSION TAKES PLACE IN DISTANT SPACE. . ITS VAST RADIATION FALLS ALL THE WAY TO EARTH— THE GENES OF LIFE FORMS ARE RADICALLY AFFECTED, SUDDENLY MUTATING—
OLD SPECIES DIE WHILE NEW SPECIES ACCELERATE REMARKABLY IN THEIR EVOLUTION.

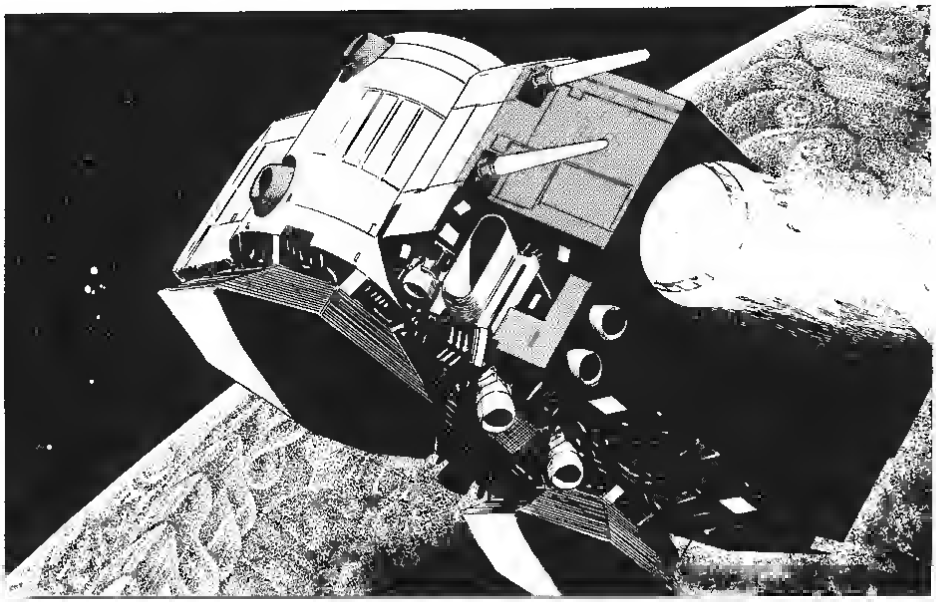
GOD MAY HAVE CREATED A HAIRY ADAM AND EVE--
--BUT WHAT THE HELL WAS IT THAT CHANGED THEM INTO HUMAN BEINGS?!
WHAT THE HELL GAVE WISDOM TO MONKEYS, LET THEM INVENT TOOLS, LET THEM BUILD A CIVILIZATION?! WELL, CHAVEZ?!
STOP IT!
IF LUCIFER IS THE DEVIL'S STAR, IF ITS INFLUENCE LED HUMANITY TO ITS FALL..
..THEN, CHAVEZ, ARE YOU SAYING HUMANITY--SCIENCE--WAS CURSED FROM THE START?!

THAT--
--THAT IS MAN'S ORIGINAL SIN, CLEAVER...
I HAVEN'T GOT LONG TO LIVE. I KNOW HOW MUCH RADIATION I WAS EXPOSED TO...
...EVEN SO, I'VE VOWED IN MY HEART TO FIGHT SATAN 'TIL THE END.
EVERYONE, EVEN SCIENTISTS, ARE PART OF THAT FIGHT-- ISN'T THAT SO?
EVEN IF SATAN DWELLS IN A PLACE FROM WHICH WE CAN NEVER HOPE TO ESCAPE...

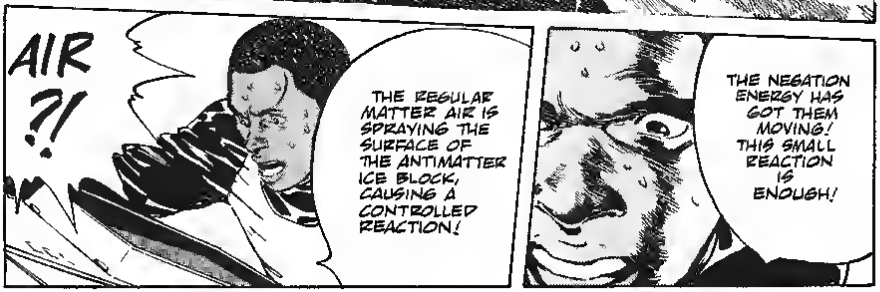

WHA
?

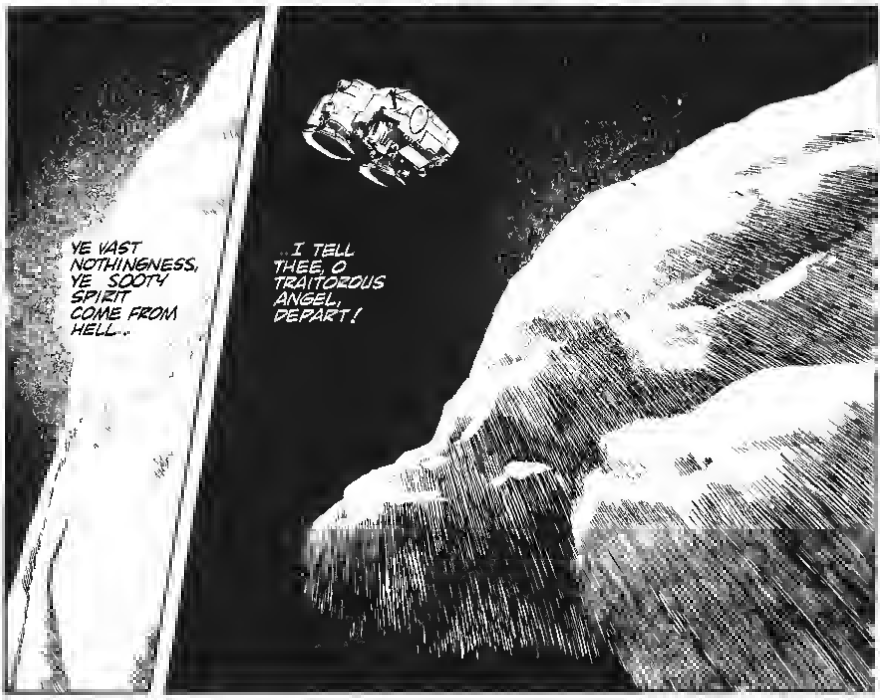
KANG
N-NO! THE MOMENTUM'S GOING TO MAKE US HIT IT!
WE BE ON FULL REVERSE ALREADY!
AAUGH!

CHAK
I'VE RAISED CABIN PRESSURE TO MAXIMUM! RIU, HANG ON TIGHT!
I'M GOING TO OPEN THE AIRLOCK!
THE AIRLOCK?
WRRR
FSSSSSHT
FHSHSHHSHST



I, A SERVANT OF CHRIST, COMMAND THOU EVIL SPIRITS--
--DEPART FROM MAN AND VANISH TO THAT DILAPIDATED ABODE WHENCE YOU CAME!

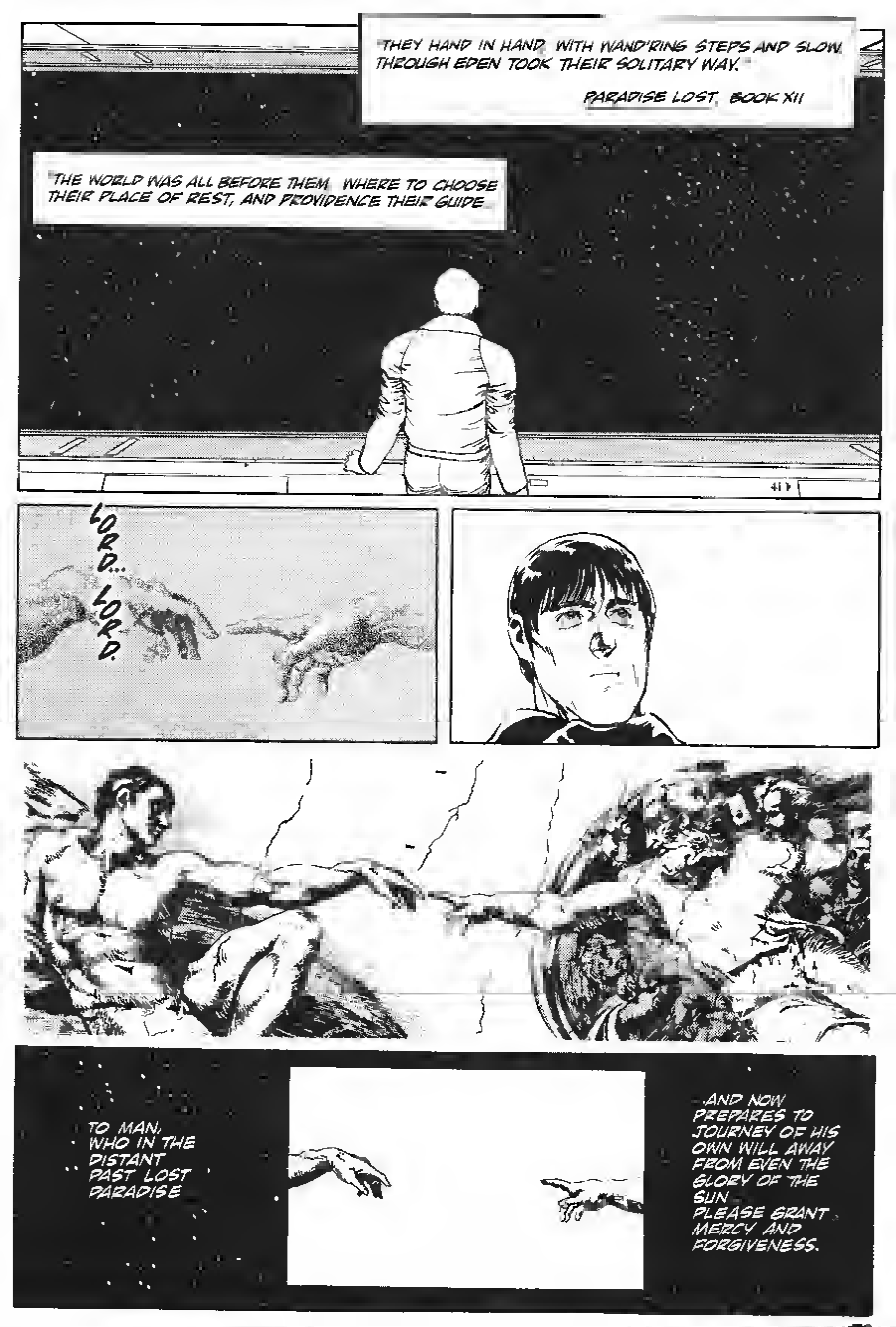

AIR ?!
THE REGULAR MATTER AIR IS SPRAYING THE SURFACE OF THE ANTIMATTER ICE BLOCK, CAUSING A CONTROLLED REACTION!
THE NEGATION ENERGY HAS GOT THEM MOVING! THIS SMALL REACTION IS ENOUGH!

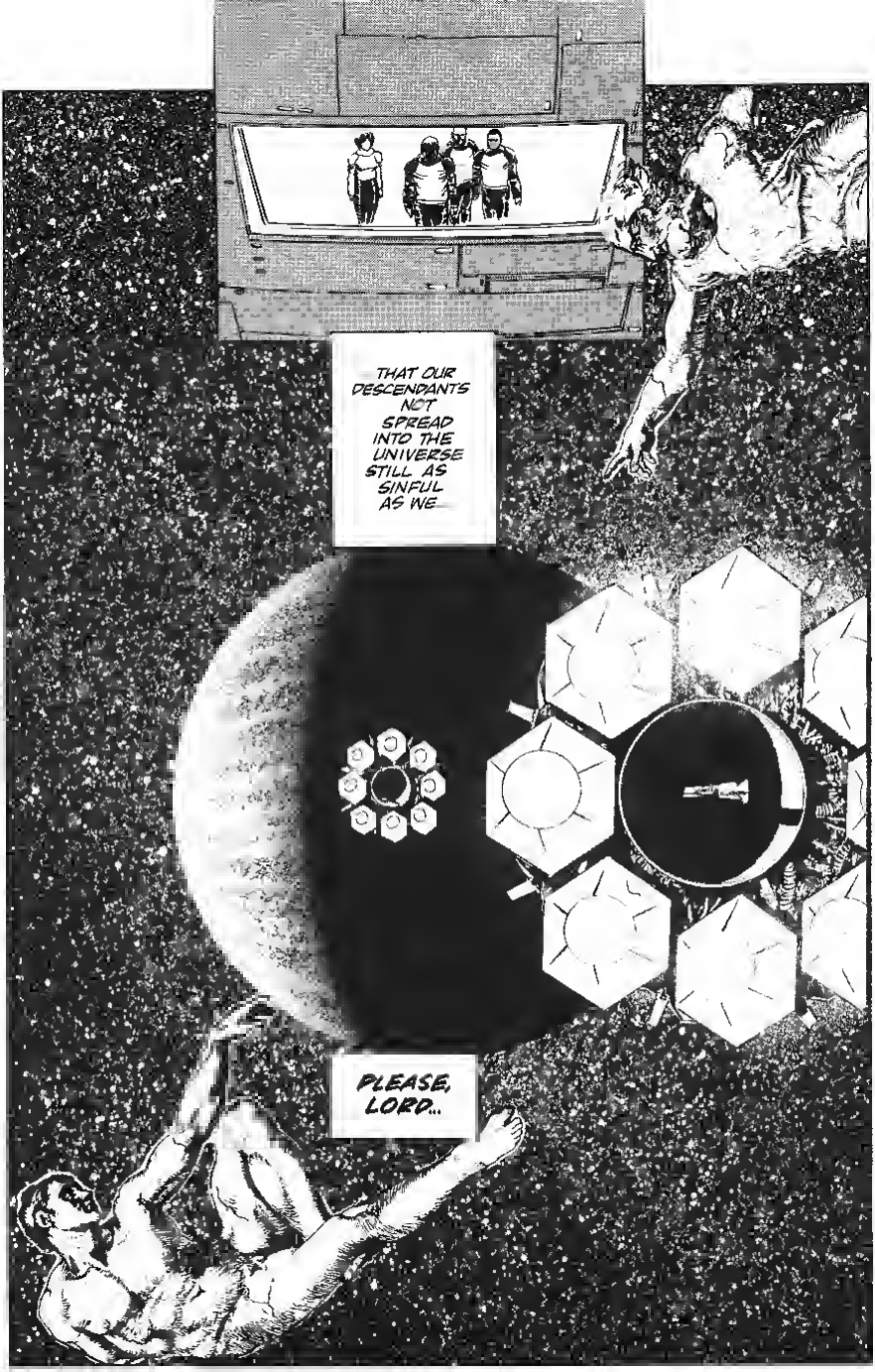

YE VAST NOTHINGNESS, YE SOOTY SPIRIT COME FROM HELL..
..I TELL THEE, O TRAITOROUS ANGEL, DEPART!

DEPART!
W-WE'RE SAFE MICHAEL..
MICHAEL
DR CLEAVER ?!
MICHAEL ?!

WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE THE INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE AN ACCOUNT OF THE CAUSES AND DETAILS OF THESE EVENTS SEVEN YEARS FROM NOW. THE ENTIRE CREW STRONGLY HOPES THAT SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES NEVER ARISE AGAIN.
FINAL REPORT FROM LUCIFER PROBE ZEFIRO.
WE HAVE COMPLETED OUR INVESTIGATION AGENDA AND ARE NOW ABOUT TO ENTER OUR SEVEN-YEAR RETURN ORBIT. THERE WERE MANY IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES CONCERNING LUCIFER, BUT BECAUSE OF REPEATED TROUBLE, WE HAVE LOST SIX CREW MEMBERS.
ROGER ZEFIRO. THIS IS EARTH BASE. WE HAVE SOMETHING TO REPORT. THE COUNTRIES OF EARTH HAVE AGREED TO COLLABORATE IN ATTEMPTING TO EXPLOIT LUCIFER. AT THIS MOMENT, ZEFIRO II AND ZEFIRO III AWAIT ORDERS IN JUPITER ORBIT.

THE POPE...?
ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNICATION, HE DIED YESTERDAY. A HEART ATTACK OR SOMETHING...
I SEE-- THE POPE DIED, TOO..
TWO GREAT FANATICS DISAPPEARED TOGETHER...
AND THE HUMAN RACE MARCHES INTO THE UNIVERSE, EH? USING AN INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLY OF ANTIMATTER ENERGY...
...AT LAST EATING UP EVEN THE DEVIL'S STAR.
ARE YOU HURT--IN PAIN? DR CHAVEZ...?
NO...


"THEY HAND IN HAND, WITH WAND'RING STEPS AND SLOW, THROUGH EDEN TOOK THEIR SOLITARY WAY."
PARADISE LOST, BOOK XII
"THE WORLD WAS ALL BEFORE THEM, WHERE TO CHOOSE THEIR PLACE OF REST, AND PROVIDENCE THEIR GUIDE."
LORD.. LORD.
TO MAN, WHO IN THE DISTANT PAST LOST PARADISE
AND NOW PREPARES TO JOURNEY OF HIS OWN WILL AWAY FROM EVEN THE GLORY OF THE SUN
PLEASE GRANT MERCY AND FORGIVENESS.


THAT OUR DESCENDANTS NOT SPREAD INTO THE UNIVERSE STILL AS SINFUL AS WE
PLEASE, LORD...